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THE
LIFE
OF
RICHARD BENTLEY, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE :

WITH AN
ACCOUNT OF HIS WRITINGS,
AND
ANECDOTES OF MANY DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS
DURING THE
PERIOD IN WHICH HE FLOURISHED.

BY
JAMES HENRY MONK, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED & CORRECTED.

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CONTENTS

OF

VOL. II.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAGE

Johnson's Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus—Bentley's Sermon before the King— Regius Professorship of Divinity—Death of Dr. James, the Professor—The expected Candidates—Dr. Bentley elected Professor—Bentley's prelection on the disputed text in St. John—Bentley's Letter on the subject—Decides on rejecting the verse—Duties of the Professor—His Inaugural Speech— Bangorian Controversy—Value of the Professorship—Bentley's expensive improvements of his Lodge—His granary—Richard Walker—Bentley's tithe wheat—Nomination of Scholars—Of College servants—Colbatch's two Letters to Bishop Fleetwood—Commemoration Sermon—Bentley makes and plants the College walks—King George visits the University—The Duke of Somerset—Behaviour of Grigg, the Vice-chancellor—Bentley creates some Doctors of Divinity in the King's presence—Bentley demands an additional fee from the new Doctors—Dr. Conyers Middleton resists the payment— Grounds of Bentley's claim—Dr. Gooch, Vice-chancellor—Dr. Richard Warren—Vice-chancellor's Court—Dr. Gooch deprived of his Chaplaincy to the King—Bentley quarrels with the Vice-chancellor—Offends the other Heads—Decree to arrest Bentley—Proceedings of the Court—Bentley suspended from his degrees—His appeal refused—Prohibited from acting as Professor—The Chancellor comes to Cambridge—Refuses Bentley's offer of submission—Grace for the degradation of Dr. Bentley—Efforts of his friends in his favour—The Senate deprives him of his degrees	1
--	---

CHAPTER XIV.

Bentley petitions the King against the University—Gooch re-elected Vice-chancellor—Lays an account of the University proceedings before the King in Council—Matter referred to a committee of the Privy Council—Pamphlets by A. A. Sykes—Sherlock—Middleton—Bentley's own Tract against Middleton and Miller—Agitation of the University—Pretended plots against Dr. Gooch—The Fellows of Trinity renew their exertions to procure a hearing for their Petition—Lord Chancellor Parker's promises—The Petition again read in Council—Bentley concludes a treaty with Serjeant Miller—It

is at first rejected by the Seniority—Dr. Baker procures signatures in favour of Bentley's scheme—The bargain is ratified by the Seniors—Arguments for and against the transaction—Subsequent history of Miller—Bishop Fleetwood again refuses to interfere—Abuses of the Master's authority—Appeal to the Visitor by Charles Squire—Middleton writes a pamphlet against Bentley's College government—It is censured by the Seniority—Bentley's attempt against Colbatch—Prosecutes the publisher—Middleton confesses the authorship—Is prosecuted—Colbatch claims the vacant rectory of Orwell—The struggle between him and the Master—Bentley obliged to give way—Humphreys admitted Fellow—Lectures on the Catechism, &c.—Treatment of Malled and Craister—Bouquet—The design of a Royal Visitation of the University abandoned—Dr. Gooch elected a third time Vice-chancellor—Application to the Court of King's Bench to deprive Bentley of his Professorship—Election for M.P. of the University - - - 62

CHAPTER XV.

Account of Bentley's children—His intimate acquaintance—Dr. Davies's devotion to him—Second edition of Cicero's *Tusculans*—Bentley's domestic habits—Progress of his edition of the New Testament—Assistance of Wetstein—John Walker resides at Paris, collating manuscripts for Bentley—Benedictines of St. Maur—Ancient Italic version of the Scriptures—Montfaucon—Bentley's Proposals for publishing the New Testament—His specimen—Middleton's Remarks on the Proposals—Written in a disgraceful spirit—Various persons suspected of having written the Remarks—Bentley's reasons for thinking that Colbatch had supplied the materials—His reply—Virulent abuse of Colbatch—Colbatch seeks redress for the injury—Bentley's Reply censured by the Heads—Colbatch prosecutes the printer in the Vice-chancellor's Court—Dr. Cross—Middleton's Further Remarks on the Proposals—Reported assistance by Ashton—Letter by Philalethes—Pearce's two Latin Epistles—Dr. Smalbroke's Letter—Mistaken opinion that Bentley's edition was stopped by Middleton's pamphlet—Great extent of the subscription—Fails in his attempt to import paper duty-free—David Casley—Middleton found guilty of a libel—Kept in long suspense—Change of ministry—Act of Grace—The Chief Justice advises a settlement—Middleton begs pardon of Bentley—Pays the costs—Made Principal Librarian of the University - - - 112

CHAPTER XVI.

Ancient Sigeian Inscription, published by Chishull—Bentley's letter to Dr. Mead on this Inscription—Bentley's restoration of an old Delian Inscription—Alexander Cunningham's censure of Bentley's Horace—Cunningham labours to destroy Bentley's credit—Validity of his strictures examined

—Comparison of Bentley and Cunningham—Thirlby's Justin Martyr—Cotes's Harmonia—Markland's Epistola Critica—Wasse—Bentley's revision of Nicander—Attack on Bentley in the Spy—Lord Orrery—Verses by Dr. Bentley—Colbatch pursues the prosecution of Bentley for a libel—Bentley cited to give evidence in the Vice-chancellor's Court—Is absent on the King's service—A Rule from the Court of King's Bench to stop the proceedings of the University—Colbatch writes Jus Academicum—The proceedings against Bentley dropped—Bentley prosecutes Colbatch's publication—Interest in Colbatch's favour with the Ministers—Lord Chancellor Macclesfield—Chief Justice Pratt—The publisher committed—Colbatch solicits the King's pardon—Lord Carteret—Bentley applies to the Court of King's Bench to procure his restoration to his degrees—University employs Sir Philip Yorke as counsel—Colbatch's case—Favour promised him by Lord Townshend—Prevented by the Lord Chancellor—He is committed—Sentence by Mr. Justice Powis—Middleton's tract, 'Bibliotheca Cantabrigiensis Ordinandæ Methodus'—Prosecuted by Bentley for a reflection on the Judges—Middleton fined 50*l.*—Bentley's cause against the University—The Judges deliver their opinions against the University—The Senate still keeps up the contest—Peremptory mandamus to restore Bentley's degrees

- 156

CHAPTER XVII.

Dr. Bentley restored to his rank and station—Middleton renews his action to recover four guineas—King's favour to the Universities—Bishoprick of Bristol offered to Dr. Bentley—Great expenses of his late law-suits—Theological Schools—Examination for University Scholarship—Professor Pilgrim—Foundation of Battie's Scholarship—Causes of offence between Dr. Hare and Dr. Bentley—Hare's knowledge of the Latin comic metres derived from Bentley—He publishes Terence—His Dedication to Lord Townshend—Bentley's resentment—He prints a rival edition—Constant censure of Hare—Dissertation on the Metres—Commencement speech—Edition of Phædrus—Westenhof's Terence—Resentment of Dean Hare—'Epistola Critica' to Dr. Bland—Burman publishes Phædrus—Rupture between him and Bentley—Bentley's and Burman's editions of Lucan—Bentley's design of publishing Ovid—Still occupied on the New Testament—Vatican manuscript—His nephew, Thomas Bentley—Election of Public Orator—Bentley's controversy with Burford respecting the old statutes—Epitaph on Sir Isaac Newton—Bentley appoints a deputy in the Schools—Trinity College—Dr. Greene, Bishop of Ely—Opposition to the Master at an end—His son chosen Fellow—Lease of Massam House—Bentley builds a country-house—His nominations to Fellowships—Rejection of Benjamin Stillingfleet—Bishop Gibson—Claims of Westminster School—Dean and Chapter solicited to interfere—Bentley resists their pretensions

- 208

	PAGE
bable error in the Statute—Colbatch petitions the House of Lords—Com- promise between Bentley and part of the Prosecutors—Colbatch renews the suit—Court of King's Bench grant a mandamus addressed to Dr. Walker— Death of Dr. Davies—Destruction of his notes on Cicero's Offices by fire—Contests for the Vice-chancellor's office	- 303

CHAPTER XX.

Bentley's proposed edition of Homer—Account of the Digamma—Bentley's discovery of its use by Homer—Great difficulty of the undertaking—Pro- nunciation of the Digamma—Account of Richard Dawes—His book—His treatment of Bentley—Heyne's Homer—Pope's Hostility to Bentley— Arbuthnot ridicules Bentley's critical style in <i>Scriblerus</i> —Attacks him severely in an imitation of <i>Gulliver</i> —Pope's <i>Dunciad</i> —Mallet's poem on Verbal Criticism—Pope's direct attacks upon Bentley—Walker's return to the mandamus of the King's Bench—Mandamus addressed to the Bishop of Ely—Quashed by the Court—A third mandamus procured to enforce the execution of the sentence—Parne rejoins the prosecutors—Chief Justice Lee—Court discharges the rule—Death of Bishop Greene—Termination of the efforts to procure Bentley's expulsion—College distressed by the ex- penses of the suit—Bentley brings an action against Colbatch as Arch- deacon of Ely—Ecclesiastical Procurations—Decision in Bentley's favour— Colbatch's pamphlet—Discovery of a sect of Atheists—Strutt—White- head—Ducket—Public trial—Court adjourned to Bentley's Lodge—Duck- et's expulsion—Society for the encouragement of learning—Publication of Bentley's <i>Manilius</i> —Bentley has a paralytic stroke—Is disabled from pub- lishing Homer—Death of Mrs. Bentley—Bentley's intimates in old age— His domestic habits—Cumberland's account of them—Pope's fresh offence against Bentley—Fourth book of the <i>Dunciad</i> —Miller the botanist— Thomas Bentley's publications and death—Warburton's conduct in respect to Bentley—Singular proof of Bentley's sagacity in correcting a Greek inscription—Bentley's last illness—His death—Funeral—Disposition of his property—His library and papers—His family—Remarks on the personal character of Dr. Bentley—His literary merits—Trinity College	- 360
--	-------

APPENDIX.—Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea	- 427
Sentence pronounced upon Dr. Bentley by Bishop Greene	- 440
Dr. Bentley's Will, extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury	- 441
INDEX	- 445

LIFE

OF

RICHARD BENTLEY, D.D.

CHAPTER XIII.

Johnson's Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus—Bentley's Sermon before the King—Regius Professorship of Divinity—Death of Dr. James, the Professor—The expected Candidates—Dr. Bentley elected Professor—Bentley's Prælection on the disputed text in St. John—Bentley's Letter on the Subject—Decides on rejecting the verse—Duties of the Professor—His Inaugural Speech—Bangorian Controversy—Value of the Professorship—Bentley's expensive improvements of his Lodge—His Granary—Richard Walker—Bentley's tithe wheat—Nomination of Scholars—Of College Servants—Colbatch's two Letters to Bishop Fleetwood—Commemoration Sermon—Bentley makes and plants the College walks—King George visits the University—The Duke of Somerset—Behaviour of Grigg, the Vice-chancellor—Bentley creates some Doctors of Divinity in the King's presence—Bentley demands an additional Fee from the New Doctors—Dr. Conyers Middleton resists the payment—Grounds of Bentley's claim—Dr. Gooch, Vice-chancellor—Dr. Richard Warren—Vice-chancellor's Court—Dr. Gooch deprived of his Chaplaincy to the King—Bentley quarrels with the Vice-chancellor—Offends the other Heads—Decree to arrest Bentley—Proceedings of the Court—Bentley suspended from his Degrees—His Appeal refused—Prohibited from acting as Professor—The Chancellor comes to Cambridge—Refuses Bentley's offer of submission—Grace for the degradation of Dr. Bentley—Efforts of his friends in his favour—The Senate deprives him of his Degrees.

At the beginning of the year 1717 Dr. Bentley experienced a rude and virulent attack from Mr. Johnson, the master of Nottingham school, on ac-

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Johnson's
Aristarchus
Anti-Bent-
leianus.

count of his edition of Horace. I have already mentioned my belief that this person is the same Richard Johnson who had been his youthful contemporary at St. John's College : in which case it is not improbable that early pique, or some offence at the neglect of old acquaintance, might have led to the immoderate bitterness of this publication. It seems indeed hardly possible to account for his malignity against our critic, except upon the supposition of personal hatred or resentment. The Horace, having now been five years in the hands of all scholars in Europe, might have been considered as past the danger of such harsh and ill-natured attacks. Johnson possessed an uncommonly accurate knowledge of the Latin language and the niceties of its grammatical construction ; and had made himself known with considerable credit by ' his Grammatical Commentaries ; ' a book in which the errors of common grammars are noticed ; as well as by other works of a similar tendency. Of his present undertaking he gives the following account : on the perusal of Bentley's Horace, he was struck with several instances of perverted phraseology in the emendations, which he thought might be demonstrated to be changes for the worse ; and he detected in the Latinity of the notes many inaccuracies. Of the latter blemish in our critic's writings we have already spoken. Johnson waited a year or two in expectation that these faults would have been exposed by some other hand : but when he found that the edition, instead of being reprobated, was every where admired and extolled, and was generally placed in the hands of young men, he resolved to buckle on his own armour, and break a lance with this mighty Aristarchus ; in order, as he says, that it might be ascertained, whether himself or those who praised the book had lost their

senses. His design was interrupted by a severe illness, accompanied with tormenting pain, which for a long time deprived him of the use of his limbs. On his recovery he again took up the Horace, and pursued his strictures till they had swelled to a volume of above 200 pages: this he styled *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*; the hint of which title was taken from Bentley's own assumption of the attributes of Aristarchus. Being unable to extend his critique through the entire work, he confined his censures to the text of the first book of Odes, and the Latinity of the notes in the whole volume. The first class of errors which he undertakes to point out are *forty-six* in number, the second *ninety*: and the very title-page, in which the mistakes are termed *erubescendi* and *fædissimi*, shows what mercy they had to expect from the stern pedagogue. In his preface, indeed, he has the grace to condemn the habit of scholars abusing one another, but takes an exception in favour of his own case; and as an apology for out-doing all his predecessors in what he acknowledges to be a bad practice, he urges Bentley's arrogant commendations of himself, and contemptuous language towards others; stringing together all the passages in which he thinks him guilty of either of those enormities. Upon the first fault I have already animadverted sufficiently: those boastful expressions, when brought together, have certainly a ludicrous effect; and such an exposure was in itself punishment enough to have satisfied even a rigid censor. His second list of passages fails in making out a case against our critic: the instances of contumelious language, when raked together, are not very numerous; some of them are counterbalanced by compliments elsewhere paid to the same persons; and

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

several of the censorious expressions are only such as might, I fear, be found in the writings of the mildest and most candid critics that ever illustrated an ancient author¹.

It is obvious that Bentley's delinquencies do not afford the slightest excuse for the insolent and abusive tone which pervades every sentence of Johnson's book. No term of contumely does he spare; but heaps contempt and reproach upon his adversary, much in the same terms as he would have applied, when in his worst humour, to the exercise of a blundering school-boy². He, like Mr. Ker, had passed his life in the detection of minute errors of construction; and here he obtains many triumphs over the great object of his antipathy. The Doctor's notes on Horace were composed with haste; and in so large a work some slips more or less heinous, could

¹ It is perfectly preposterous to abuse and insult Bentley for such sentences as the following, which occur in his notes: "Crediderim equidem jam nunc interpretes judicii poenitere; sed et adhuc aliud reliquum est nihilo minus poenitendum."—"Nullus est omnium interpretum, quin ad hunc locum, veluti ad scopulum, naufragium fecerit."—"Hæc tot interpretes patienter tulerunt: quia sic invenerant in editionibus prisca. At si bonis uti suis novissent, meliora eos docere poterant codices scripti."—"Infelicitèr hunc locum tentavit Nic. Heinsius, et infelicius multo Dacerius."—"Ecquid vero jam videtur? Annon sordet præ hac nostra lectio illa vulgata?"—"Cruquius in re, quæ maximi quidem momenti est, subinde annotanda nimium securus et indiligens erat."—"Quam conjecturam, etsi Rutgersio mirifice placuit, multo deteriorem esse judico."

² The following are a few instances of the manner in which the school-master of Nottingham treats the first scholar of the age: these specimens are taken casually and without selection; the reader will find similar *dicta* in every page:

"Videsne omnia sicca et sana esse, nihilque, præter ipsum te *ineptum* atque *inficetum*?" p. 12—"Digna quidem *Bentleio*, non *Horatio* sententia. Quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt?" p. 34.—"Vide hominis levissimi, atque obliviosi inconstantiam." p. 45.—"Sapientiam tuam rerum cæterarum quæ sit, nescio; in hac te stultissimum præbuiisti." p. 56.—"Satin' sanus es qui hæc dicas? Satin' sobrius?—Quin tu potius (lemirare insignem stultitiam atque hebetudinem tuam." p. 70, &c. &c.

hardly have been avoided. But whoever takes in hand the *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*, in which the extracts from the notes and Johnson's censures upon them are given alternately, will acknowledge the superiority of Bentley in the ease, perspicuity, and classical elegance of his language; and would be sorry to exchange it for the rugged exactness of his adversary.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Although many of Johnson's strictures are well-founded, yet it must not be inferred from his positive and contemptuous tone, that all the objects of his displeasure are 'shameful blunders.' Bentley might have found in his enemy's work sufficient matter for severe retaliation. But I am not aware that he deigned to take any notice, either public or private, of this attack, or even showed a consciousness of its existence: indeed, when his Horace was reprinted in 1728, he omitted to correct some undoubted slips in language pointed out by Johnson; from which we might infer that he had never seen the schoolmaster's production.

As an interlude between the two divisions of his book, *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus* gave a burlesque criticism upon some lines of *Tom Bostock*, an old English ballad, in ridicule of Bentley's style. An extract of this scholastic *jeu-d'esprit* will be seen in a note. The absurd translation of Latin phrases fails to throw any just ridicule on the Horace, while it proves the author himself to have been a vulgar fellow. Nevertheless this must be acknowledged to be a curious hit: unless he had the gift of divination, he could not have foreseen that his adversary would ever publish emendations of an English poet: but whoever has read Bentley's notes on Milton, written fifteen years after this drollery, will confess that it is no bad

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

caricature of the tone and language actually adopted by him in that extraordinary performance³.

“ And now my hand’s in, after the example of great authors, and the Doctor in particular, I shall not think much of my labour, for the reader’s benefit, the honour of the English nation in general, and the family of the Bostocks in particular, to put down one stanza of a certain English Marine Ode, for so in good truth it is, and so it is entituled in all the parchments, and the first editions; how in the latter it came to be called a Ballad, I, for my part, can’t tell; let them look to it that were the cause of it. But ’tis high time to put down the place. Why so it runs then,

Then old Tom Bostock he fell to the work,
He prayed like a Christian, but fought like a Turk,
And cut ’em off all in a jerk,

Which no body can deny, &c.

“ Now you must understand, this Tom Bostock was chaplain, in Latin *capellanus*, in a sea-fight, a long time ago, and after the enemy had boarded the ship, cut ’em all off to a man. O bravo Tom! Thus much for the interpretation. Now to the reading.

“ *Old*. I have a shrewd suspicion that all is not sound at bottom here; how sound a complexion soever the words may seem to have. For why *old* pray ye? What he hewed down so many lusty fellows at fourscore, I’ll warrant ye? A likely story. I know there is *old boy*, as well as any of ye: but what then? And I could down with *old Tom* in another place, but not here.

“ For once again, I say, why *old Tom*? What, when he was commending him for so bold an action, would he rather say, *old Tom*, than *bold Tom*? Was it not a bold action? Is not the word *bold* necessary in this place? And do you find it any where else? Thou, therefore, ne’er be afraid of being too bold, no, rather boldly read *bold Tom*, I’ll bear thee out; in Latin, *me vide*. But you’ll say, neither edition, nor manuscript hath this reading; I thought as much.

“ What of all that? I suppose we have never a copy under the author’s own hand: as for the librarians and editors, what can you expect from such cattle as they, but such stuff as this? One grain of sense (and God be thanked I don’t want that) weighs more with me, than a tun of their papers.”

* * * * *

“ *Tom*. Some would fain make us believe, that we are to read *Ben* here: much good may do ’em with their *Ben*. I for my part shall never believe that the poet would ever put *Ben* and *Bostock*, two words beginning with a B so near together: such grating stuff wounds the ears; such stuff could never come from so terse a poet as you may guess by the work: for as for his name, though no pains have been wanting, nor charge neither, in getting manuscripts from all parts of the world, I’ll say that for myself,

Johnson did not very long survive his exhibition in the character of *Aristarchus*: he was overtaken by some mental malady which proved the precursor of his melancholy fate. Little more is known respecting him, but that in the year 1720 he drowned himself in the meadows adjacent to Nottingham ⁴.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Immediately after the King's return from Hanover, Dr. Bentley preached before his Majesty in his capacity of Royal Chaplain. His sermon, which was printed, is a masterly dissertation on Rom. xiv. 7. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself*: this text he treats in his usual perspicuous and forcible manner, leaving nothing untouched which bears upon the subject. There are many readers who will be as much pleased with this discourse as any other part of the Doctor's writings: they will perhaps not find much that is new to them; but when they see with what ability he illustrates a sacred text, they will not fail to wish that he had devoted more of his time to benefit the world in this department. The following extract is interesting, as showing the sentiments of so powerful a mind upon an important and much controverted point:

Bentley's
sermon be-
fore the
King.

"But let none of my hearers so misinterpret our Apostle; as if, by saying, *None of us dies to himself*, he taught that none of us could be accessory or contributing to his own death. Without doubt he was not of their opinion, that believe the time, cause, and circumstances of every man's death to be fixed as immoveably by God's prescience, as by necessity or fate. God can foresee contingencies, the free resolves of rational agents, as well as the most necessary events in the material and inanimate world: but the divine prescience

I cannot recover it. Besides, who ever heard of a *Ben* of the Bostocks? Tom, George, and Harry I'll allow ye; but only Tom was the parson though; and that this is spoke of the parson or chaplain of the ship is plain."—*Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*, p. 109.

⁴ See *Gilbert Wakefield's Life of himself*, p. 22.

CHAP. does not superadd nor imply a fatal necessity. That notion robs us
 XIII. of our free-will, of our reason, of our very soul ; is repugnant both
 1717. to observation, and the revealed word of God. 'Bloody and deceitful men,' says the Royal Psalmist, 'shall not live out half their days :' so that impiety and guilt deprived them of half that space of life, that in a natural course of things they might have arrived to. And does not daily experience teach us, that intemperance, temerity, and violence, cut men off in the flower of their age, and in the very meridian of life ? And again, how many are daily reprieved and rescued from the very jaws of impending death, by the saving care and skill of the physician ? But then withal, though the space of life may be thus shortened, and the thread of it broken by such accidents (though even those too come to pass, not without the foreknowledge or permission of God) yet perhaps it can never be lengthened by all the power and wisdom of man. A flower or fruit may be plucked off by force before the time of their maturity ; but they cannot be made to outgrow the fixed period, when they are to fade and drop of themselves. The hand of nature then plucks them off, and all human art cannot withhold it. And as God has so appointed and determined the several growths and periods of the vegetable race ; so he seems to have prescribed the same law to the various kinds of living creatures. In the first formation and rudiments of every organical body, there are contained the specific powers both of its stature and duration. And when the evolution of those animal powers is all exhausted and run out, the creature expires and dies of itself, as ripe fruit falls from the tree. So that, as we cannot add one cubit, one inch, to our stature ; so neither can we add one day, one hour, to our years, beyond that fixed limit of natural life, to which our original frame and constitution was made to extend. So certain is it, that none of us either liveth, or dieth to himself, but all of us to God ; who has given to each of us his particular body, with the determined powers and period belonging to it." *Sermons*, p. 391.

Regius Pro-
 fessorship of
 Divinity.

Our narrative has now arrived at an interesting epoch of Dr. Bentley's life—his accession to the Regius Professorship of Divinity. This office, the most valuable as well as most dignified in the University, had been for some time the object of his ambition ; and during the last year, when the declining health of the Professor, Dr. James, the President of Queen's College, caused the expectation of a

vacancy, he suffered it to publicly known that he aspired to succeed. The prevailing sentiments of the University were far from being favourable to his pretensions. Besides the odium which he had incurred from causes already related, there was an obstacle of a legal nature in the way of his obtaining this high appointment. The statute of foundation of the three King's Professors of Divinity, Hebrew, and Greek, which allots them stipends and residence in Trinity College, and gives a preference, in case of parity of merit among the candidates, to Fellows of that Society, concludes with forbidding them to hold along with their professorships any other office either in the University or in that College. The words of this prohibitory enactment are, *Nemo prædictorum Lectorum, durante tempore Lecturæ suæ, ullum officium, Magistratum, aut Lecturam aliam vel in dicto Collegio, vel in Academia habeat, sub pœna prædicta*. Hence it was contended that the Master of Trinity was distinctly and pointedly excluded from the chair: and this express prohibition was confirmed and accounted for by various other enactments, which commit the jurisdiction and superintendence of the Regius professorships to the Master of the College, jointly with the Vice-chancellor. A Professor is, upon his election, to be sworn and admitted by the Master, who is also to admonish him should he neglect his duty, to be his judge in case of complaints of heresy or any notable crime, and to deprive him upon hearing and conviction. It was alleged therefore to be plainly impossible that the statute could contemplate or allow the Master's holding a situation, in which he might become his own visitor and his own judge. In opposition to these arguments, it was urged by Bentley and his friends that two of his predecessors, Dr. Richardson and Dr. Arrowsmith, had held the Divi-

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

nity professorship, each for the space of two years, along with the mastership. Upon the latter precedent indeed no stress could be laid, as it had occurred during the Usurpation, when the statutes were frequently violated by the arbitrary mandates of the Protector. Nor was the case of Dr. Richardson, one of the Translators of the Bible, exactly in point; he having held the professorship some years before he was appointed Master: it did however serve as a clear proof, that the union of the two offices, whether legally or not, had once been permitted. The statute reposes the choice in the breasts of the electors, who are sworn in a particular form, appealing strongly to their consciences, to choose the candidate most likely to confer honour upon the University, and benefit upon the students. If therefore a majority should judge Dr. Bentley to be, under all circumstances, the fittest and most eligible candidate, it was contended that nothing could invalidate their decision. The electors to these offices are the Vice-chancellor, the Master and two senior Fellows of Trinity, the Provost of King's, and the Masters of St. John's and Christ's Colleges; the concurrence of four of those seven in favour of the same candidate being necessary to constitute an election. Three of them, Dr. Adams, Dr. Jenkin, and Dr. Covell, the Heads of King's, St. John's, and Christ's, had declared themselves against the pretensions of the Master of Trinity, being convinced that he was excluded by the positive enactment, as well as the whole scope and tenor of the statute. At the election of a Vice-chancellor in November, it being thought improbable that Dr. James could survive another year, this subject appears to have influenced the proceedings; at least I am aware of no reason for setting aside the ordinary course, except that Dr. Bradford was believed to be a

Nov. 3.
1716.

favourer of Bentley. His exclusion seemed a great blow to the Master's hopes ; particularly as Mr. Grigg, the person chosen, avowed an opinion similar to that of the three Heads just mentioned. To this it may be added, that the two senior Fellows of Trinity having been for four years and a half his determined prosecutors, and being sufficiently mortified at the failure of their endeavours to remove him from the mastership, could hardly be supposed favourable to his views on the present occasion. To have persevered under such discouraging circumstances, proves the sanguine character of Bentley's mind, and the reliance which he placed upon his own ingenuity and resources.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

The above detail has been necessary to enable the reader to comprehend the extraordinary proceedings which ensued on the death of Dr. James. The Vice-chancellor happened to be absent in London, whither he had gone with an address of congratulation to the King upon his safe return, and the disappointment of the scheme for a Swedish invasion in favour of the Pretender. The Heads being assembled at the funeral of the deceased Professor, the acting chief magistrate, Dr. Lany, consulted the Master of Trinity upon the steps to be taken for the election of a successor. Bentley asked him, whether he had received his appointment as deputy under the hand and seal of the Vice-chancellor ; and being answered in the negative, put an end to the conversation, by telling him that ' then he had no concern with that affair.'

Death of
Dr. James,
the Profes-
sor.
March 15,
1716-17.

March 19.

The statute orders that on the day after the vacancy becomes known, the Vice-chancellor shall, with the consent of the Master of Trinity, convene the electors to a meeting, at which they are to issue a public notice, and fix a day for the examination of

Bentley
tries differ-
ent methods
to obtain it.

CHAP. I.
XIII.
1717.

candidates. This not having been done, Bentley was prepared to maintain that the professorship had, by non-compliance with the statute, fallen to the appointment of the King, as representative of the founder. Accordingly, when the Vice-chancellor returned, about the end of the month, and applied for his consent to the meeting, he flatly refused it; alleging that the office had now lapsed to the Crown⁵. His next step was to have been a solicitation of it for himself. Ingenious as this scheme certainly was, there were evident obstacles to its success. The statute is silent upon the subject of a lapse; the words which fix the time for the meeting, *postridie quam locum vacare intellexerint*, do not prohibit a reasonable interval, for the vacancy to become known to a Vice-chancellor who may happen to be absent: the King's ministers would hardly have assumed the appointment without a legal assurance of their right; and however they might be disposed to oblige the Doctor, he could not expect them to be forward to embark in a quarrel with the University. This precarious plan therefore was to be adopted, only in case all other measures were hopeless. But he did not despair of making an impression upon the Vice-chancellor. Mr. William Grigg was chaplain to the Duke of Somerset, and had been appointed by his patron Master of Clare Hall, the votes of the Fellows at the election being equally divided between two

Grigg the
Vice-chancellor.

⁵ Another account of this affair, by Dr. Colbatch, states that Bentley first refused to give his consent to the proceedings, except upon the condition of the other electors declaring, under their hands, that they made no exception to the eligibility of the Master of Trinity: and that upon their declining to say any thing of a matter not yet before them, he withheld his consent, and at length declared that the office was lapsed. The narrative in the text is taken from the account of Attwood, the Esquire Beadle, whose duty kept him in constant attendance on the proceedings of the Vice-chancellor, and who wrote down all occurrences with great care in his Diary.

candidates, (one of them Mr. Laughton, the celebrated disciplinarian and instructor, with whom the reader is acquainted), and the nomination having thereby lapsed to the Chancellor of the University, as Visitor. What arguments the Doctor could use with this gentleman, it is not easy to conjecture : but as no connection or friendliness appears ever to have subsisted between them, I am inclined to suppose that the interest made in Bentley's favour was not with Grigg, but with his patron the Duke ; and that at his instance he listened to the Doctor's proposals. Having, however, already declared himself against the eligibility of the Master of Trinity, he could not with decency aid in choosing him. Professor. But Bentley's fertile invention suggested a stratagem to overcome this and all other embarrassments : it was, that Grigg should go out of the University, at the same time constituting him Deputy Vice-chancellor : the rest was to be left to himself. Accordingly, after above a fortnight passed in negotiations, this scheme was put into execution. On the 17th of April, the University learned with amazement that the Vice-chancellor was gone, and had appointed Dr. Bentley his deputy. The main obstacle was now forced, and the field open for his operations. Uniting in himself the two characters of Vice-chancellor and Master of Trinity, he summoned the electors to meet in the Schools on the following day. The statute orders that if any one of the number be Vice-chancellor, his place shall be supplied by the President of Queen's College: during the late time of suspense, Dr. Davies, the editor of Cicero, whose attachment to Bentley we have had occasion to remark, had succeeded Dr. James in the Headship of his college, and in that capacity claimed the place of an elector. The two

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Bentley
Deputy
Vice-chancellor.

April 18.

Dr. Davies
President of
Queen's.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

senior Fellows of Trinity were unable to be present ; the first, Dr. Stubbe, residing in 'London, and the second, Mr. Cock, being prevented by age and infirmity from quitting his rooms : but their places were supplied, agreeably to the statutes, by the two next in order, Modd and Bathurst, both of whom the Doctor had found means to render propitious to his views. These four issued a *programma* appointing a day for examination of candidates. The other three electors chose to absent themselves from a proceeding the evident tendency of which they disapproved.

The expected candidates.

No mention has yet been made of any other candidates for this important professorship. There were, however, at least three in the public contemplation : Dr. Colbatch and Mr. Waterland were wished by their respective friends to be introduced to a chair for which each was thought highly qualified : but various circumstances detailed in the last chapter will account for neither of them choosing to oppose the Master of Trinity. The person generally fixed upon was Dr. Charles Ashton, the Master of Jesus College. This gentleman, who possessed in a high degree the respect and regard of the University during the unexampled period of fifty-one years that he continued one of its Heads, was among the most learned men of his time, and particularly versed in the departments of knowledge required from a theological professor ; and he it was, I apprehend, whom the seceding electors had designed to support. But, like them, he did not think proper to present himself at the meetings summoned by Dr. Bentley.

April 25.

On the day appointed the Master of Trinity appeared in the Schools as Vice-chancellor, along with Davies, Modd, and Bathurst ; when after waiting in vain for the other electors the space of one hour, he declared

himself a candidate, and offered to be examined according to the statute. The conclave declined a public examination as unnecessary; but appointed him a day to read his *prælectio*, or probationary lecture. No other candidate appearing, the meeting separated.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

On the 1st of May Dr. Bentley delivered his *prælection* before a crowded audience, on the disputed text of the Heavenly Witnesses in the First Epistle of St. John: and on the following day he was chosen Regius Professor of Divinity by the four votes of himself, Dr. Davies, Mr. Modd, and Mr. Bathurst.

Dr. Bentley
elected Pro-
fessor,
May 2.

The daring manœuvre by which Bentley attained this object of his ambition, astonished and confounded his opponents. If they had hoped to defeat his operations by keeping aloof, they found themselves completely in error. It might be true, that the peculiar conjuncture of circumstances was the result of intrigue and collusion; yet it could not be denied, that from the moment when he was constituted Deputy Vice-chancellor, the proceedings had been conducted with strict attention to the forms of the statute. The electors who contended that the Master of Trinity was absolutely excluded and ineligible, had, by withdrawing from their post, lost the opportunity of protesting against such an election as illegal, in case they could not have prevented its taking place. The absence of other candidates supplied an argument in favour of those who elected Dr. Bentley: in the event of litigation they would naturally allege that they had no alternative; that they were bound to execute their functions, and no other person was offered to their choice. Whatever was the mortification of his opponents, they were compelled to digest it in silence: no attempt was at that time made to dis-

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Bentley's
prælection
on the dis-
puted text
in St. John.

pute his title; and he was suffered to take quiet possession of the theological chair ⁶.

The subject of his prælection being the authenticity of the disputed verse of 1 St. John v. 7., great curiosity has lately been expressed respecting it; all persons agreeing that much weight must be attached to the sentiments of the prince of critics upon such a question. The composition excited great sensation both at the time and long afterwards: it was preserved in manuscript, and perused by some scholars little more than forty years ago. I hope and believe that it is still in existence, and may ere long be brought to light; but all my endeavours to trace it have hitherto been ineffectual. It has however been in my power to collect such testimony respecting its contents, as must put an end to all the doubts which have been started relative to Bentley's judgment upon the controverted text.

Contro-
versy on
the verse.

The dispute upon the genuineness of this verse had lately been revived: a summary of the opposite opinions appeared in Dr. Mill's *Prolegomena*. It was attacked by Emlyn the Arian, and defended by Martin the French refugee priest of Utrecht; and the controversy just then maintained by those combatants, drew the attention of all theological readers to the merits of the question. In the December preceding, Bentley received a long letter from a layman, whose name has not been preserved, written in consequence of a report that the verse would be omitted in his promised edition of the New Testament. This corre-

⁶ Hearne writes thus, on May 7, 1717. "Dr. Bentley is elected Regius Professor of Divinity of the University of Cambridge, in the room of Dr. James, deceased. He was opposed by Dr. Ashton, Master of Jesus, who had got it, had not Bentley used knavery. Ashton was best qualified." MSS. in the Bodleian library.

spondent argues earnestly for its genuineness, upon the evidence of the context of the whole passage; the sense of which, he contends, would be incomplete without it. To this epistle our critic returned an answer, explaining clearly and concisely the nature of his proposed edition, the object of which was to restore the text as it stood in the days of St. Jerome in the fourth century. Upon the point in question, he adds,

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Bentley's
letter on the
subject.
January 1,
1716-17.

"Now in this work I indulge nothing to any conjecture, not even in a letter, but proceed solely upon authority of copies, and Fathers of that age. And what will be the event about the said verse of John, I myself know not yet; having not used all the old copies that I have information of.

"But by this you see, that in my proposed work, the fate of that verse will be a mere question of fact. You endeavour to prove, (and that's all you aspire to,) that it may have been writ by the Apostle, being consonant to his other doctrine. This I concede to you; and if the fourth century knew that text, let it come in, in God's name: but if that age did not know it, then Arianism in its height was beat down, without the help of that verse: and let the fact prove as it will, the doctrine is unshaken."

His correspondent rejoined with a further exposition, urging the necessity of admitting a verse, the rejection of which he thought, like many other orthodox persons, would afford a triumph to the Unitarians. He afterwards published the three letters, with some additional remarks of his own, which proved nothing but his disqualification to discuss such a subject. Bentley, finding how much the question interested the public mind, and perceiving that there was expected from the editor of the New Testament a clear expression of opinion on this point, applied himself in the course of the four following months to examine all the evidence on both sides. Having chosen this as the subject of his Prælection,

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Decides in
rejecting
the verse.

he gave a regular history of the verse, and an account of the manner in which the passage of St. John is quoted by ancient writers; and concluded with a decided rejection of the verse; maintaining at the same time the doctrine of the Trinity in its orthodox acceptation, and showing that it stood not in any need of such dubious support.

My account of this Prælection does not rest, like other narratives of Dr. Bentley's life, upon the statement of Whiston; which is confessedly given only from hearsay: I have more than once had occasion to notice the credulity and inaccuracy of that writer, which makes his sole authority an unsafe guide in every instance⁷. But the following evidences are liable to no such exception. First, Atwood the Esquire Beadle, who was present and heard Dr. Bentley's composition, says in his manuscript journal, 'that he read away the text (1 St. John, v. 7.) to the utmost of his power.' Secondly, Conyers Middleton, who probably heard the discourse, and who at all events wrote in the University, and for readers who had heard it, speaking four years afterwards of Bentley, says, "He has already, *we know*, determined against the genuineness of the famous passage of St. John, 1 Epistle v. 7. For what reason has he condemned

⁷ *Whiston's Life of Dr. S. Clarke*, p. 77. "This treatise, as I have been informed, was alluded to by Dr. Bentley in his own famous lecture at Cambridge soon afterward, when he stood candidate for the chair of Regius Professor of Divinity: wherein he also entirely gave up that text, and publicly proved it to be spurious. I have been also informed, that when Dr. Waterland was asked, 'whether Dr. Bentley's arguments did not convince him;' he replied, 'no: for he was convinced before.' Nor does the Doctor, I think, ever quote the text as genuine in any of his writings; which, in so zealous and warm a Trinitarian, deserves to be taken great notice of, as a singular instance of honesty and impartiality." Little credit is due to Whiston's information upon this matter, as is justly observed by the present Bishop of Durham, in his *Life of Waterland*, p. 25. In fact, the latter part is distinctly contradicted by Waterland himself, in a letter to Mr. Loveday: *Works*, vol. x. p. 410.

it as spurious? Why because some manuscripts and some Fathers have omitted it⁸." My third evidence is Professor Porson, who had in his youth seen this Prælection, and observes in his Letters to Travis, that 'Bentley read a public lecture, which is still extant, to prove the verse spurious⁹.' Lastly, Dr. Vincent, the late learned Dean of Westminster, once had the original of this piece in his possession, lent to him by a relative of Bentley: a letter of his now lies before me, containing the account which I have just given of its contents, and adding that to him 'it was conviction¹⁰.'

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

The duties of his newly-acquired office were various and important. The Regius Professor is expected to preside and moderate at all disputations in the

Duties of
the Profes-
sor.

⁸ *Middleton's Works*, vol. ii. p. 373.

⁹ *Porson's Letters to Travis*, Pref. p. viii. That Porson had himself seen this lecture, I have learnt from two of his friends to whom he communicated the fact. It is mentioned by Mr. Kidd, in his *Misc. Tracts*, Pref. p. xlv.

¹⁰ This letter, addressed by Dean Vincent to the late learned Dr. Charles Burney, Sept. 3, 1806, has been obligingly communicated to me by his son, the Rev. C. P. Burney, D.D. It gives an account of some papers of Bentley's lent him by a relation of the great critic, who had two sons under him at Westminster. "They consisted," says he, "of several sermons, or rather dissertations in form of sermons, all on learned questions: one on the three heavenly witnesses, was in Latin. It was not a *Concio ad Clerum*, but as well as I remember, a sort of inauguration discourse as Professor of Divinity. Another was an argument to prove that the Epistle to the Ephesians was the lost Epistle to the Laodiceans, and, I think, in English. What the remainder consisted of I do not recollect: it is five and twenty years ago since I saw them. That on the Three Heavenly Witnesses was a regular and historical narrative of the manner in which the context in this part of St. John was cited by different authors from the earliest date down to Erasmus, and a decided rejection of 1 John v. 7. Maintaining, however, the doctrine in its most orthodox acceptation. To me it was conviction: and I have always felt the charge of Emlyn, who reproaches the Church of England for having in her first translations, printed the verse in a different character, and afterwards dropping the character, and suffering the verse to stand without remark, like any other indifferent text. The doctrine, as Bentley observed, did not stand in need of a false support: but this was doing evil that good might come of it."

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Theological Schools ; to deliver his own judgment or 'determination' on the subjects of discussion ; to present candidates for theological degrees ; to create the Doctors of Divinity with appropriate speeches ; to deliver lectures twice in the week during term ; and to preach in Latin before the University on certain stated days. There can be no doubt but that the new Professor was admirably qualified to discharge all these duties with honour to the University and reputation to himself. Notwithstanding his addiction to other pursuits, theological studies had, at certain periods of his life, occupied much of his attention ; and for the scholastic disputations, his prompt and clear-sighted judgment, his acuteness in the detection of fallacy, and his logical turn of mind admirably qualified him ; while his peculiar attainments were sure to temper with classical elegance the dryness of school-divinity. It is impossible not to wish that Bentley, having now attained the age of fifty-five, had devoted himself entirely to the professorship ; with which the care of his edition of the New Testament would have been consistent. Such were his capacity and power of application, that he would perhaps have reaped a greater accession of fame from this than could accrue to him from any other pursuits ; and the remembrance of the manner in which he possessed himself of the chair, might have been effaced by the applause that followed the execution of its duties. Being now invested with increased sanctity of character, it is greatly to be wished that he had adopted a different course in the government of his College. Had he so done, the road to conciliation and tranquillity was open ; and it is probable that every legitimate object of ambition would still have been within his reach.

His inaugural speech.

Our Professor, on first taking possession of the

chair, delivered an inaugural speech in the Divinity Schools, which occupied not less than an hour and a half; giving a full account of himself, his pursuits, his works, and his designs. Some notice of this speech has been preserved in a letter addressed to Bishop Nicolson from David Wilkins, Librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury: it is written in a sneering and ironical tone; nor can there be a better instance of the truth of the poet's observation, *nihil est—Quin male narrando possit depravarier*. This letter will be seen in the note, and is sufficient to make us regret that the production itself, delivered by Bentley in the gaiety of his heart, and in the moment of triumph, has not been preserved ¹¹.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

“ Bene't College, June 9, 1717.

11 “ My Honoured Lord,

“ If the Cantabrigians had the advantage which the Oxonians enjoy, to write daily by the post to London, your Lordship should have had an account of Professor Bentley's remarkable speech, at the entering into his office, by Friday's post.

“ The whole discourse contained in substance nothing but an enarration of his performances done, and some that are to follow. He began to give us the reasons why, now he was *in limine senectutis*, he desired to be made Professor, in spite of his *ringentes* rivals; and *patefecerit viam* to that place which he refused eighteen years ago, because he formerly had other views. He liked the company of great men at Court; but now every place in London was full of contention, quarrel, and tumult. *Jam Cantabrigia placet, placent bibliotheca, placet aer, placent eruditorum hominum mores*; so that he designs to live and die here. He thanked the Pro-Vice-chancellor, the Master of Queen's, and his two Senior Fellows, for choosing him Professor, and put at the same time a slur upon the three Heads of Houses that should have been present at the election. He was full of praises of his predecessors, of whom some were made Bishops, some Archbishops; and that he was sensible how unworthy he was to succeed them; especially since all the world knew that he had studied more the *Humaniora* than divinity. But yet he said that he has had Thomas Aquinas in his study these thirty years, and had read him; that he had studied Syriac, Chaldaic, and other Oriental languages, till he was like to fall into a consumption. It was true indeed that he had printed Phalaris, Callimachus, Menander, Tully's Tusculan Questions, and Horace; and that thereby he had showed himself a philosopher and a critic, rather than a *theologus*. But yet he had printed some Sermons at Boyle's Lectures, which were translated into several languages; that he had refuted

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Bangorian
Contro-
versy.

It will be recollected that at this very time, the celebrated Bangorian Controversy was in full progress; and perhaps it may be wondered that the newly-elected Professor of Divinity did not engage his ready pen in a dispute which interested and divided the whole nation. Attention to his new functions was, it is true, sufficient to absorb all his time and thoughts; but the reader has seen him capable, when urged by any strong motive, to abstract his mind in the pursuit of heterogeneous objects, even at the busiest and most anxious moments of his life. Had he however been tempted to

the Free-thinkers, for which he had the University's solemn thanks; and *Augustissimi Principis Matrōna* had ordered him the printing of it. Besides this, he said, that he has read a great many of the Fathers, Greek and Latin; that he had Clemens, Origen, and Eusebius, ready for the press; and if that would not deserve him the title of a *theologus*, he said, that under Beaumont* he had taken his Doctor's Degree. But that, says he, is no proof, because a man by being a Doctor of Physic is not supposed to be a physician; nor a Doctor of Laws to be a lawyer (which he intended for a reflection upon the Professors† of those two faculties). Then he desired his auditors not to judge his abilities at present, now he begins his office: *detur crescendi copia*; and after-ages will show that he is a *theologus*, by reason of his excellent design of a new edition of a New Testament; of which, by the help of Origen and St. Jerome, and some very old MSS, he will make the text so undoubtedly true, *ut e manibus Apostolorum via purior et sincerior evaserit*, which shall for ever be a standard of Religion to Christianity. At last he promised to read over the Scholastic Divines; and whatever of modern divinity the pamphlets contained he would buy, and exercise himself and his disputants; to whom he *sancte* promised to be very civil: assist the respondents; and give room for the opponents to exercise their talents; and moreover that he would encourage any body in printing of divinity books; and so concluded.

"In his answer to the question about the Supremacy of the Pope, he asserted, that abundance of Christian Bishops ought not to give place to the Bishop of Rome; and that, if he was to meet in a place with the Archbishop of Canterbury, our Archbishop should take place of him."—*Bishop Nicolson's Correspondence*, p. 458.

* "Joseph Beaumont, D.D.; Divinity Professor, 1672; died Nov. 22, 1699."

† "Francis Dickens, LL.D. and Christopher Green, M.D."

engage in this great controversial combat, there was, if I mistake not, an insuperable reason which must have kept him aloof. His opinions on the subject in dispute would probably have led him to take part with Sherlock, Snape, and the High-church combatants; while his acquaintance, connections, and interests, lay entirely with the opposite party.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Dr. Bentley's income received a large addition from the revenue of his new office. The professorship of Divinity, like those of Hebrew and Greek, was originally endowed with the fixed stipend of forty pounds; a sum sufficient in the reign of Henry VIII. to maintain the respectability of the holder. But in process of time, the altered value of money having rendered this salary utterly inadequate, King James I. gave to the Divinity Professor the rectories of Somersham, Pidley, and Coln, in Huntingdonshire. The income of this endowment was reputed to be about 300*l.* a year: the new Professor, considering the rent inadequate, took into his own hands the great tithes, which he collected by the agency of Kent, his bailiff, to whom he let the small tithes of the parishes. From this measure he expected to raise the value of his office, with the addition of stipend and fees, to 600*l.* a year.

Value of the
Professor-
ship.

The Fellows of Trinity found themselves no gainers by the prosperity of their Head: the increase of his University preferment made the prospect of his removal, with which the mal-content party had consoled themselves, less probable than before; and his determination to increase the comforts and convenience of his residence, subjected the College to a series of renewed expenses. About this time an old summer-house belonging to the Master, being in want of repair, Bentley thought it more advisable to pull it down, and build a larger one contiguous to

Bentley's
expensive
improvements of his
Lodge.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

his own study: and here he made a bath, supplied with water by a pipe from the College conduit¹². This edifice the malignants termed 'a banqueting room.' In this year and the following the garden of the Lodge was newly laid out with walks and grass-plots; and a terrace was made on the bank of the river, which continued to be Bentley's favourite walk for the remainder of his life. All this was executed without any order from the Seniority; but the expenses were allowed at the audits. These works, and a double-vaulted cellar for his wine, being undoubted improvements of the College premises, might have produced little or no murmuring (though the cost was about 900*l.*), had it not been for another fancy of the Master's. Two out-houses in the back premises of the Lodge, heretofore used as a dove-cote and a lumber-house, he converted into a spacious granary, at an expense of above 300*l.* and immediately filled it with large quantities of tithe wheat and malt, conveyed in barges from his rectory of Somersham. In the course of the next two years the greater part of these articles was sold to Trinity College for the supply of the bakehouse and brewery. As this transaction took place on the mandate of the Master, and as the largest prices were paid for them by the College officer, an immediate outcry was raised against Bentley as exercising the trades of 'a farmer and a maltster'¹³. Nor was this all: it happened that the malt was damaged by an insect called the weevil; and in this state the brewer was obliged to take it to the amount of 700 bushels, although he declared the impossibility of its making good liquor; an assertion which Bent-

His granary.

Damaged malt sold to the College.

¹² *Middleton's Present State of Trinity College, Works*, vol. iii. p. 362.

¹³ *Middleton's Present State of Trinity College, Works*, p. 370. "He immediately became the greatest farmer and maltster in the country."

ley either disbelieved or disregarded. The brewery of this College had always been noted for its peculiar excellence : and when, on the next great College festival, the badness of the beer was complained of, and the butler questioned in the hall respecting it, that officer, to obviate further examination, declared that 'it was brewed from the Master's malt.' Hardly any particular in Bentley's life subjected him to more scandal than this transaction : the story, circulated and improved by his enemies, conveyed the joint imputation of meanness, rapacity, and indecorum. In the fulness of time it became a matter of judicial investigation, and the facts were deposed by various persons. The evidence of Kent the bailiff, which there seems no reason to dispute, shows that the malt was really not the Doctor's ; but that he himself, being a maltster, had purchased the tithe barley, and sent it, when malted, to the Trinity granary, and that the Master received the money on his account. This statement, it must be confessed, does not materially alter the complexion of the case ; since it is evident that Dr. Bentley used his magisterial power to obtain a better and more certain market for the commodity than it could otherwise have commanded : he was, in one shape or other, the gainer by the arrangement ; and whatever risk or loss was incurred, fell upon the society, whose interests it was his duty to protect¹⁴.

The granary had been made without permission of the Seniors, the Master having only casually mentioned before some of them that he was preparing a place to hold oats for his horses : a pretence so

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Trinity
Sunday,
1719.

Junior Bur-
sar refuses
to pay for
the granary.

¹⁴ The details of this transaction are given by Dr. Colbatch in several manuscript papers, and are told with much bitterness by Middleton in his *State of Trinity College, &c.* My account is taken from an examination of the various witnesses on both sides, at the trial at Ely House, in 1733.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

different from the real design, that it added not a little to the odium he incurred. Mr. Myers, the junior bursar, to whose office all works on the College buildings appertained, having been cautioned by Dr. Colbatch, scrupled to pay for the granary, as being executed without the authority required by the statutes. But his conscientious behaviour had no other effect than to bring upon himself the resentment of the Master, who, at the ensuing election of officers, opposed his re-appointment. On this occasion however he met with unusual opposition, six of the eight Seniors having spirit enough to vote for Myers. But the Doctor overruled them by the exercise of his prerogative, and chose Richard Walker, who, being of the standing of Bachelor of Divinity, was disqualified for this office by a law of his own making, on the importance of which he had laid so much stress a few years before.

Richard
Walker.

The character now introduced to the reader will play no inconsiderable part in the sequel of our history, being of all Bentley's friends the most sincerely attached and devoted. His intimacy, which began at this period, was kept up by daily intercourse as long as the Master lived; and he continued to cherish his memory the whole of his own life with remarkable affection. This gentleman had but lately resumed his residence in College, having been absent since the year 1708, serving a curacy at Upwell in the Fen-country; whence his contemporaries facetiously distinguished him from others of the same name by the title of *Frog Walker*; a nick-name by which he is still designated. His friendly disposition, his liberality and public spirit, and his almost chivalrous devotion to the fortunes of his Master, have procured him a celebrity in University annals, to which his talents and acquirements do not seem to

have entitled him. His first appearance on the stage was far from being creditable : he paid the bills for the granary, as well as all other works which it pleased the Master to order, during the four years that he continued College Edile, without once troubling the Seniority for their consent ; and when he brought his books to be approved at the audits, he was found to have so intermixed the charges of the Lodge with the general expenses of the College, that it was in vain to think of disentangling them.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Another heinous accusation was brought against the Master, relating to the produce of his rectory : he was reported to have managed a collusive sale of wheat in Cambridge market, on the day when the prices of that article, according to which the College tenants pay their half-year's rents, were to be determined. It was said that Porter, the College butler, made a purchase at 5s. a bushel of Kent, his bailiff ; while no other wheat was sold in the market at more than 4s. 7d. ; and that in order to cloak the transaction, he had stipulated with one Rule, a farmer, noted for the excellence of his wheat, to give him 5s. for a quantity of it, if brought to sale on that day : in the market, Kent produced a sample of the Somersham tithe wheat, which being compared with the other, and pronounced equal, if not superior, appeared entitled to as large a price. A double purpose was here effected ; the College rents were fixed unduly high, and the Master's own tithe wheat was sold out of his granary to the College at a greater price than it was worth. The story being circulated with surprising industry, Bentley's enemies charged him with an offence of peculiar magnitude ; that of bringing public disgrace upon his College. However, after a careful examination of the evidence on this subject, I must declare that the charge of

Sept. 28,
1717.
Bentley
accused of a
collusive
sale of
wheat.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

fraudulent or dishonourable conduct is not made out; nor are we warranted in believing that the collusion, if any existed, took place with Bentley's cognizance. Porter, the butler, distinctly denies it: he was, it is true, the creature of the Master; but unless we suppose him guilty of wilful perjury, the accusation was untrue; and this I am the rather led to believe, because Dr. Ayloffe, the bursar, allowed to have been a scrupulous and conscientious man, jealous of all irregularities, and not favourably disposed to the Master, could not have been ignorant of the deceit, had any been committed.

Bentley kept his tithes in his own hands for three years; when either to avoid further obloquy, or finding the advantage not commensurate with the inconvenience, he let them to Kent, who was still accommodated with the use of the College granary. But the late transactions were not forgotten, and ever afterwards made a prominent figure in all the complaints of his adversaries.

Bentley's
nomination
of Scholars.

The Doctor's College administration in the years 1717 and 1718 presents little more than the same absolute disposal of places, honours, and preferments, as we have already witnessed; and to this assumption of authority all resistance now seemed hopeless. At the election of scholars in 1717, he allowed none to be candidates but those previously selected by himself, and their number was exactly the same as that of the vacancies. Some young men, not included in his list, having entered their names, he immediately ordered them to be erased. This continued afterwards his ordinary practice; and that there might be no doubt of the Master being the sole fountain of honour and reward, he gave the candidates this subject for a theme, *Nemo ex hoc numero mihi non donatus abibit*. Such an exercise of patronage, be-

sides overturning all but the semblance of statutable election, had another mischievous tendency. The disputes of their governors were found to descend to the young men; and it had been for some time observed that the students were divided into two parties, the friends and enemies of the Master: many from their first coming to the College attached themselves to one or other of the two factions; and it was suspected, that in the selection of students to be admitted on the foundation, these party attachments were not overlooked ¹⁵.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

The Master's appointment of the various college servants seemed to proceed upon the idea of those situations (some of them posts of considerable trust) being appendages of his own household. Thus the places of butler, porter, and cook, were given to his domestics; of which no complaint would have been made had they been qualified for their respective posts: but when he conferred the place, or rather the emoluments, of porter upon his coachman, and after his death upon his son, a boy of fifteen, a serious abuse ensued. He suffered the duties in both cases to be executed by deputies; who having no remuneration except such fees and presents as they could obtain, opened the gates to young men at unseasonable hours of the night, to the destruction of College discipline, and injury of the morals of the students.

Of College
servants.

Dr. Colbatch was able to watch and denounce, but not to arrest the proceedings of the Master. Being foiled in all his efforts to procure a visitation by petitioning the Crown, he now obtained leave from the Bishop of Ely to lay before him a detail of

Colbatch's
two letters
to Bishop
Fleetwood.

¹⁵ In the year 1717 the Master forbade the sizars being candidates for scholarships before their third year: a rule which has in practice been followed, with few exceptions, from that day to the present.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

the college grievances. This he did in the year 1717, in two letters, couched in the severest language, and well calculated to communicate the indignation with which he was himself inspired. The first contains an exposition of Dr. Bentley's government, as concerned the elections, discipline, and studies; the second, of his malversation regarding revenues and expenditure. But the liberty of venting his complaints was the only satisfaction with which he was indulged. Bishop Fleetwood remained immovable in his resolution to take no steps as Visitor of the College, until he was empowered and required to do so by the King's command; and he now urged, in addition to his former reasons for not interfering, that the Petition of the Fellows to the King remained still unanswered.

Commemo-
ration Ser-
mon.
Dec. 17,
1717.

Thus repulsed, Colbatch had no further resource; but in a sermon which it was his turn to preach in the College Chapel at the commemoration of Benefactors, he made a powerful appeal to the religious feelings of his auditors, laying before them the real objects of the foundation, and the duties particularly demanded of the governors of a college, and adding a dignified rebuke upon what he deemed an abandonment of those obligations: a censure, perhaps, the more felt, because its tone was calm and temperate. This discourse was published, and appears to have excited considerable sensation. Bishop Smalridge, then Dean of Christ Church, was said to have declared that it ought to be read once a quarter by every governor of a college; and Dr. Bentley himself felt it right not only to avow his approbation of it, but to say he was ready to subscribe to every word ¹⁶.

¹⁶ See Preface to *Middleton's Further Remarks*, Whiston's Life, p. 356. In this Sermon Colbatch paid a remarkable tribute to the merits of Laughton, the tutor of Clare Hall, which deserves to be recorded, and is

The only particular of Bentley's administration at this period which can be recorded with satisfaction is, that he laid out and made those beautiful walks on the opposite side of the river Cam, which are so great an ornament and convenience to the College and University. This ground, previously called the back-green, had been purchased above a century before by the exchange of more than thirty acres of land in the outskirts of Cambridge: it appears, however, to have been left in its original state of a fen. In the years 1717 and 1718 the present walks were formed, and the beautiful avenues of lime trees, the very perfection of academic groves, were planted. Although the Doctor became a planter at a somewhat advanced age, he lived long enough to enjoy the shades of his own rearing. It is, perhaps, right to add that the cost bestowed upon these walks, though amounting to 500*l.* and that too without order of the Seniority, seems to have been so well laid out, that it never gave rise to any murmuring or discontent.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Bentley
makes and
plants the
College
walks.

The visit of King George I. to the University, was followed by results so curious and unexampled, as to form a kind of episode in our academical history. As the transactions of the day itself had considerable influence upon the subsequent events, it is my duty to detail from the beginning all that I find to have taken place on that occasion.

King
George
visits the
University.

His Majesty having, in imitation of his predecessors, visited Newmarket with his court, the Vice-chancellor, Heads, and other members of the University went over to invite him to honour Cambridge with his presence, and took that opportunity of thanking him for the late signal instance of his munificence. The

Oct. 4,
1717.

the more honourable to both, from the fact of their being of opposite parties. "We see," says he, "what a confluence of nobility and gentry the virtue of one man daily draws to one of our least Colleges."

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Sovereign gave them a gracious reception, and promised to visit the University on Sunday the 6th, and by this short notice precluded as far as possible all expensive preparations. We noticed in our account of Queen Anne's visit, that when the Monarch is present in this University, it is customary to give Doctors' and other degrees to all whom the Royal pleasure may nominate for such dignities. Upon the present occasion a list was prepared, comprising twenty-seven noblemen and others in the King's suite, who were to be made Doctors of Laws, and thirty-two of the most distinguished members of the University, on whom the degree of Doctor of Divinity was to be conferred. To Bentley belonged the twofold duty of creating the Doctors as Professor of Divinity, and receiving the Royal guest at his lodge, as Master of the leading college. But the University was destined to be honoured on the same day with the presence of another august personage, its Chancellor, who is generally known by the appellation of 'the proud Duke of Somerset;' and his reception was as much a matter of care and punctilio as that of the Monarch himself. Having determined to receive the King at the head of the University, he signified his intention of coming over at nine in the morning; his Majesty being expected at eleven. His Grace was himself a member of Trinity College: his two sons the Earl of Hertford, and Lord Percy Seymour had successively occupied a large set of rooms in the Great Court, consisting of what had formerly been the Old Library, which were first fitted up for the reception of the former; and in those apartments the Duke designed to take up his own residence on the present occasion.

The Duke
of Somerset.

Oct. 6.
1717.
Behaviour
of Grigg the
Vice-chancellor.

Accordingly, on Sunday morning, Mr. Grigg, the Vice-chancellor, attended by a number of other Heads, proceeded to Trinity Lodge, in order to greet

the Duke upon his arrival. Dr. Bentley, to whom it appears that no previous intimation had been given of their design, was surprised and displeased at this arrangement. We may suppose him to have been occupied at that moment in giving directions for preparing his house and his college for the reception of the Sovereign, or in meditating a Latin oration which he was to deliver two or three hours afterwards, before an august and critical audience. In either case the intrusion must have been as inconvenient as it was unceremonious. He accordingly represented to the Vice-chancellor and Heads that the Consistory was the proper place in which to receive the Chancellor; adding that the state apartments of his lodge were kept for the reception of the King. Hereupon, the other Heads departed; but Grigg, not caring whom he offended so long as he was but showing attention to his own patron, resolved to remain: and in effect, he, the Senior Proctor, and three Beadles made good their lodgement in the house-keeper's room, there to wait for the arrival of the great Duke. At 10 o'clock his Grace came accompanied by the Earl of Thomond and Bishop of Norwich; they were met about the middle of the quadrangle by the Vice-chancellor, and conducted by him to the lodge of the Master, who found these august visitors forced upon him contrary to his expectations, and before he had time to change his undress gown, and put on his robes for their reception¹⁷. He did, however, receive this unwished-for

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

¹⁷ "About 10 o'clock his Grace came. As soon as he entered the College gate, the Vice-chancellor, (the three Beadles going before him in their tufted gowns, velvet caps and hoods, without their coifs,) advanced to meet him; which he did about the middle of the court.

"The Duke was very courteous; seemed wonderfully pleased to find himself in the University; and indeed carried a very cheerful air in his countenance during the whole day.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

honour with proper deference and courtesy ; the Chancellor, after viewing the handsome apartments of the lodge, went in procession as Head of the University to the Regent-house, and having there transacted the preliminary business, descended into the Consistory, to await the coming of his Majesty. About 11 o'clock the King alighted from his carriage at the Regent-walk, in the middle of which he took his seat in a chair of state in the open air ; and after a short compliment from the Chancellor, was greeted in a Latin speech by Dr. Ayloffe, the Public orator. His Majesty was then conducted with a mixture of royal and academical ceremony, to the Regent-house, where his chair was placed at the upper end of the table, which was covered with a cloth of gold. Hereupon the creation of some of the new Doctors, the only specimen of academical proceedings, which the shortness of time would allow, took place with full ceremonial. After the grace had passed for the degrees of all persons named in the Royal mandate, Dr. Bentley, as Regius Professor, presented to the Chancellor three of the number, who were Heads of Houses, Mr. Grigg, Dr. Davies (previously only Doctor of Laws) and Mr. Waterland : after their regular admission, the Professor, turning himself to the King, delivered an appropriate speech, upon what must be allowed to have been a most interesting occasion. He then created the three Doctors of Divinity with all those

Bentley
creates
some Doc-
tors of Divi-
nity in the
King's pre-
sence.

“ After compliments were over, the Beadles turned their staves and preceded the Chancellor to the lodging.

“ At the second door Dr. Bentley, in his morning gown, with his hat under his arm, received his Grace ; and though he was not all submission, he was pretty near it.

“ While he entertained the Duke in discourse, there stood the Earl of Thomond and Bishop of Norwich, unregarded : and there they might have stood, if one of the Beadles had not touched his sleeve a little ; and then he vouchsafed them a welcome also.”—*Attwood's Journal*.

ancient ceremonies to which he has added so much interest, in the Commencement-speech prefixed to his edition of Terence.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

The academical business thus concluded, the august company went in procession to the magnificent chapel of King's College, the glory of the University; in the nave of which the King was addressed in another speech from the Provost; his Majesty probably understanding these Latin orations better than any thing else which he heard that day. Here service was performed, and a sermon preached by Laughton, the tutor of Clare Hall. The procession then left the chapel for Trinity College, where his Majesty was to lodge, and where a banquet was prepared for the whole company. A distressing mistake now occurred. The Vice-chancellor wishing that his own beautiful college should have its share of the Royal admiration, chose to conduct the procession the back way to Trinity, in order that it might pass by Clare Hall. Thus his Majesty, after a passing glance at that House, was led to the Queen's-gate of Trinity: but no intimation having been given of Grigg's design, and his arrival being of course expected at the King's-gate, the Master and the whole college were drawn up there for his reception, while all the inhabitants of the town were assembled on the outside: meantime the other entrance had been closed to prevent the irruption of the populace into the quadrangle. Thus did the King find the entrance of his Royal college barred against him, and was compelled to stand five minutes in the lane, which is described to have been at that time 'a most dirty, filthy place,' before the tidings of his arrival could reach the Great Gate, and the postern be thrown open for his reception. At length his Majesty obtained admission, and Dr. Bentley at the head of the society, meeting him about the middle

The King finds himself shut out of Trinity College.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

of the court, bade him 'welcome to a college which he might call his own,' and conducted him to his lodge. The King next visited Trinity Library, the noble work of Sir Christopher Wren; but he declined honouring the public banquet with his presence, preferring to dine at the Master's lodge with a select company of ten noblemen: while the Duke partook of the dinner prepared in the hall, with the Royal retinue and the University. In the evening his Majesty attended service at the College Chapel, and then taking his leave, returned to Newmarket, and on the next day to Hampton Court; having gratified the University by his goodness and condescension, but leaving some of its members irritated against one another by certain occurrences of the day¹⁸.

¹⁸ The following notice of this Royal visit is in a letter from Dr. Wilkins to the Bishop of Carlisle, (*Bp. Nicolson's Correspondence*, p. 464.)

Lambeth, Oct. 15, 1717.

My honoured Lord,

I am but just returned from Cambridge, where I had the good fortune to be created Doctor of Divinity by Dr. Bentley. The good Bishop of Norwich had so much kindness for me, as to put me in the King's list of his own accord, by which I saved a great sum of money; only my exercises I had composed in vain, and reckon so much time lost. His Majesty has made a general conquest of the affections of grumbling people wherever he was; and expressed a great deal of satisfaction in being so kindly received by the University. The Duke of Somerset (who is said to glory more in being Chancellor of Cambridge than in his other titles) exerted himself in a fine speech, which he thus concluded: *If our University is not the learnedest society in the world, your Majesty's late present will make us so.* The University Orator made a very ingenious, learned, Latin speech, which, as well as Dr. Bentley's, the King said, he understood every word.

As long as the King staid at Cambridge, one heard nothing (although it was upon a Sunday) but ringing of bells, *Vivat Rex!* King George for ever! The country people came ten miles and farther to see this solemnity; and the King was pleased to shew himself openly; admitted every body where he dined, made presents to the poor of all parishes, to the two gaols, to the ringers of every Church, and to the Sizars of Trinity College. What will the Sister University say to this?

Your Lordship's always dutiful son,

and most obedient humble servant,

D. WILKINS.

Our narrative of this day's proceedings is principally drawn from the journal of Attwood, the Esquire-beadle, whose duty kept him in close attendance on the leading personages, and gave him the fullest opportunity of observing every thing that occurred. But this gentleman seems to have entered so strongly into the feelings of the party hostile to Bentley, that he was resolved always to find him in the wrong: nor could he perceive that his own narrative would convince any unprejudiced person that the Doctor was, in this case, at least, 'more sinned against than sinning.' The behaviour of Grigg, the Vice-chancellor, was not only at open war with good manners, but his mode of introducing both the King and the Chancellor into Trinity had a tendency to throw upon the Master the appearance of inattention; and might, therefore, have been provoking to a meeker spirit than Bentley's. On the other hand, the only complaint which his enemies could make against him was, that he had endeavoured to appropriate to himself and his college, all the honour of the Royal visit¹⁹.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

On the following morning, the adjourned Congregation met in the Senate-house, to complete the business decreed at the *Regia Comitia*; when the Professor of Divinity required from each of the Doctors whom he was about to create, a fee of four guineas, in addition to a broad-piece, which was the ancient and established compliment on this occasion. Three or four of them complied with this demand; but the greater part protested against it, as unreason-

Oct. 7.
Bentley demands an additional fee for creating the new Doctors.

¹⁹ Middleton makes this a subject of complaint against Bentley, in the controversy which took place in 1719. Great offence was given by Hacket, the College dean, saying grace at dinner. Beadle Attwood says, "Dr. Hacket had the presumption to say grace, though the Vice-chancellor was present, and he too chaplain to the Chancellor."

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Dr. Conyers
Middleton
resists the
payment.

able and unwarrantable. A long and warm altercation ensued, in which Bentley maintained the justice of his claim, and refused to give creation to any who would not acquiesce. Among the incepting Doctors, the person most prominent in the argument against the Professor was CONYERS MIDDLETON, whom we have already had occasion to notice more than once as taking a part unfriendly to our hero. This eminent and accomplished scholar occupied a house at Cambridge, where his society was much courted and enjoyed by the leading characters of the University. He had contracted an early and violent antipathy against Bentley, which only waited for such an opportunity as the present to display itself. His intimates seem to have been for the most part ill-disposed to the Doctor, and in party views he was opposed to him ; but I find no trace of any personal offence having ever passed between them, unless it were that Bentley had expressed contempt for his love of music, by terming him ‘the musical Conyers,’ or ‘the fiddling Conyers.’ In the course of the present dispute, the Professor, though he declined any appeal to the University authorities, repeatedly argued that he demanded only his right ; adding that he was the King’s Professor, and declaring his readiness to refund the fee, provided the case were decided against him by the King, or any commission or authority emanating from his Majesty. Accordingly, several of the new Doctors, and Middleton among the rest, agreed to pay the required fee, taking a promise under Dr. Bentley’s hand, that he would restore the four guineas should it be adjudged by such authority that his claim was ill-founded. The Congregation was then adjourned to the following day : in the meantime the Vice-chancellor and Heads sent over a statement of the dispute to the Chancellor, who was at Newmarket,

and received from his Grace a reply, that they must not suffer the University business to be interrupted by the Professor; along with an assurance that he would himself support their authority, if necessary, in person.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

On the 9th Dr. Bentley performed the ceremony of creating those Doctors who had given him the required fee: but some others, being refused creation, appealed to the Vice-chancellor and Heads, who pronounced at once that the demand was extortion, and ought not to be complied with. Bentley replied by denying their right of interference; told them that if they obstructed him in his demand of four guineas he would require ten; and positively declared that there should be no more creations. Hereupon it was suggested that the agency of the Regius Professor was not indispensable in this ceremony, and that it might be performed by any other Doctor in Divinity. Accordingly Dr. Bardsey Fisher, the Master of Sidney College, was directed by the Vice-chancellor to create those whom the Professor refused; which he immediately performed, receiving the broad-piece as his fee; though the confused manner in which he blundered through the ceremony; prompted by the beadle, was such a contrast to the able and dignified manner of the Professor, as afforded the latter considerable matter for triumph²⁰. However his best friends, and among them Davies and Laughton, disapproved of his obstinate adherence to such a point; and it seems to have been partly at their instance, and partly from apprehension of this new interpretation of the statute, that he conceded so far as to create the remaining Doctors, upon their giving a note promising him the

Opposition
by the Uni-
versity.

²⁰ Cole, MSS. vol. xxx. p. 106., having occasion to allude to Dr. Fisher, describes him as a 'very pleasant, facetious, and witty man.'

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

four guineas, if it were decided to be his just demand.

Grounds of
Bentley's
claim.

The reader may now be desirous of knowing upon what grounds Dr. Bentley defended a claim, which raised such extraordinary disturbance. The matter originated thus: candidates for theological degrees are exempted by the statutes from two Opponencies, part of the prescribed exercises, provided, when they keep their Acts, they have a Doctor for their Opponent. In order to secure to the Respondent this advantage, the Professor himself, who moderates, sometimes adduces arguments against him; and Bentley's two predecessors, Dr. Beaumont and Dr. James, had fixed a charge, the first of two guineas, and the last of four guineas, as a remuneration for this extra-trouble. Dr. Bentley, finding the latter sum an established charge, considered it in the light of an addition to the fee for a doctor's degree, and as such had claimed and received it from those who were created at the preceding Commencement. Supposing the duties to be really performed, since it was voluntary on the part of the Professor, and a considerable accommodation to the person graduating, there appears to be nothing unreasonable either in the principle or the amount of this demand. But he went further: he argued that the King's visit to the University, being intended as a measure of grace and favour, ought not to operate to the prejudice of any one; that, had it not taken place, each of the royal Doctors would probably have taken his degree in the ordinary way, and thus the required fee would have been paid to the Professor. He contended moreover that no hardship could be complained of, since they now obtained their doctorships at an expense of not more than 20*l.*; while, in the ordinary course, it would have been 100*l.*: thence it

was every way unreasonable that he should be a sufferer in his emoluments. When it was alleged that this demand rested upon no statute, authority, or precedent, he replied that the two other Regius Professors of Law and Physic demanded and received from each of the doctors created in their faculties the sum of 14*l.*, for which they had no better authority to plead. But, above all, he urged that Grigg himself, by whom this payment was condemned and prohibited, did at the same time receive four guineas for each of the new graduates, two as Vice-chancellor and two as Chancellor's Secretary, without the authority of statute or the pretence of trouble, but simply upon the same principle as the demand made by the Divinity Professor. This last argument tended to make unprejudiced persons believe, that the opposition to Dr. Bentley's claim was in truth the mere result of personal or party animosity.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

The argument of the other professors being undisturbed in their larger claim, was rebutted by saying, that those two officers having only the paltry stipend of 40*l.* were in a manner compelled to seek a more adequate support of their station by means of fees and perquisites; but that the Divinity Professor, being endowed with a noble benefice, had no pretence or excuse for grasping at further emoluments. After all, however, it probably will be allowed that Bentley's claim was not without grounds which deserved consideration, had the question been referred to any competent authority; but that he was greatly to be condemned for making and enforcing such a demand by his own unsanctioned will; while his obstinate perseverance in what was held pecuniary extortion, was injurious to his personal reputation, and derogatory to the sacred character with which he was invested.

CHAP.
XIII.
1717.

Dr. Gooch,
Vice-chancellor.

Nov. 4.

The election of a new Vice-chancellor shortly ensued. The persons nominated were Dr. Bradford, Master of Corpus Christi, and Dr. Gooch, Master of Caius College. Bradford was the senior; but the Tory party determined again to set him aside: it was apprehended from his intimacy with Dr. Bentley, that upon disputed questions he might incline to his interest: accordingly a contest took place, and Gooch was elected by a majority of 95 to 51.

The gentleman now invested with the chief magistracy belonged to a good family in Suffolk, and was at this time about his forty-fourth year. His political opinions had so strong a Tory cast, that they were suspected of Jacobitism. Having, while Fellow of Caius College, been chaplain to the late Bishop of London, Dr. Compton, he preached the funeral sermon at the death of that prelate, when he mentioned, in terms of the highest praise, the advice which he had given to Queen Anne, (whose preceptor he had been) to reject the two Whigs recommended for bishopricks by her Ministers, and to assert the Royal prerogative by a choice of her own. Gooch afterwards received from Bishop Robinson the archdeaconry of Essex; and in 1716 was elected Preacher of Gray's Inn, and Master of his college. He then married the sister of Dr. Sherlock, and a close confederacy existed throughout their lives between these two brothers-in-law; both of whom were raised, by Sir Robert Walpole's government, to high stations on the Episcopal bench. His contemporaries describe Dr. Gooch to have been a courtly gentleman in his manners, possessed of much address and subtilty. His letters, which I have seen, are only remarkable for a pointed and laconic style of expression.

Dr. Bentley in the meantime made no progress

towards confirming his claim to the additional fee, by the interference of the Court. He had been encouraged by the indications of favour on occasion of the late Royal visit, and expected that he, being leader of the ministerial party at Cambridge, would meet with the support of the Government. But his applications for this purpose were altogether ineffectual. Lord Sunderland did not think it right that either the name or authority of the King should be interposed in a dispute of so invidious and personal a nature; and he, I presume, was 'the great Minister of State,' who was said to have assured the Vice-chancellor that 'Government would not meddle with the matter'²¹.

At this resolution Bentley seems to have been sufficiently chagrined; and perhaps his mortification was increased by the marks of favour bestowed on Sherlock, the leader of his opponents, who had recently been made Dean of Chichester. Our professor had been introduced into the select coteries of the Princess of Wales, in which she enjoyed the conversation of the most learned men in the kingdom; and it was at her Royal Highness's special request that he resumed the third part of 'Phileleutherus's Remarks on Free-thinking.' We learn that he happened to have that work in hand just at this period; but on experiencing what he conceived ill usage, he threw it aside with indignation, complaining 'that those whom he wrote for, were as bad as those whom he wrote against.' Two half-sheets had actually been printed when he broke off his manuscript in the middle of a page, and could never be prevailed upon to resume it²².

Bentley gives up the third part of his Remarks on Free-thinking.

²¹ *Proceedings of the Vice-chancellor and University of Cambridge against Dr. Bentley Stated and Vindicated*, p. 7.

²² This account is distinctly given by his nephew and executor, Dr. Richard Bentley, who had heard it from his uncle himself. See his

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Dr. Richard
Warren.
June 19,
1718.

I find it recorded that Richard Warren, of Jesus College, who took his doctor's degree in 1718, was, when keeping his Act in the Schools, used somewhat harshly by the professor : happening to preach before the University on the Commencement Sunday, he took the opportunity of retaliating in his sermon ; but Dr. Bentley, two days afterwards, in his speech on creation of the doctors, rejoined with much severity. What was the subject of this dispute, I can only surmise ; its effect seems to have produced a lasting resentment in the mind of Dr. Warren, who treated Bentley with much asperity in an edition of Hierocles, which he published a great many years afterwards, principally with the view of decrying the emendations of our critic²³.

The Vice-
chancellor's
Court.

Dr. Middleton hearing no more of his four guineas, which were to abide the Royal decision upon the fee, thought fit to apply to the professor for their restoration, first by letter, and afterwards in person. No regard being paid to his applications, he resolved to seek the recovery of his money by suing for it as a debt, in the Vice-chancellor's court. This tribunal possesses an extensive jurisdiction both of a criminal and civil nature, for the maintenance of discipline,

Advertisement to the eighth edition of the Remarks, published in 1743, and containing the last pages written by the author. His statement coincides with that given by Dr. Salter, from Bentley's own mouth.

²³ *Rud's Diary*. I find, from a letter dated University College, Oxford, Aug. 18, 1718, that a report had reached the sister University, that Cambridge was in a great ferment, on account of Dr. Bentley having on occasion of a Divinity Act, made a speech, condemning the Epistles of St. Ignatius, and afterwards refusing to hear the Respondent, who attempted to reply. The whole of this is given as hearsay ; but it was the talk of the Long Vacation ; and as Bentley's Commencement Speech, alluded to by Rud, (who was himself created D.D. on the same day) was the last public exhibition before the vacation, and as Rud makes no mention of any other altercation occurring in the Schools about this time, it is at least probable that his dispute with Warren, and that upon St. Ignatius, were the same. If the Professor's opinion was delivered in his 'Determination,' he was perfectly correct in not suffering a reply.

the punishment of offences, and the decision of causes in which any members of the University are concerned: the sole judge is the Vice-chancellor; who acts, however, with the advice of his assessors: but an appeal lies against his decisions to the Delegates, who are either three or five individuals chosen by the Senate for the purpose. This academical court, though armed with great and comprehensive authority, is by no means one of frequent resort. A Vice-chancellor sometimes passes through his year of office without being once called upon to preside as judge. But in the time of Dr. Gooch, the functions of the court were displayed with unwonted activity. Mr. Bull, of Queen's, who has been noticed as a friend and partizan of Bentley, was prosecuted for defamation by Mr. Warde, a Fellow of the same college: whether the quarrel between these two gentlemen was of a private or a public nature, it is needless to inquire: it probably partook of both characters. Bull was convicted and censured; but the Vice-chancellor did not escape some outcry from the Whig party, who charged him with partiality to the prosecutor. The defendant then appealed to the Delegates, who however confirmed the sentence. Soon afterwards, proceedings were commenced in the court against Philip Brooke, a Fellow of St. John's College, one of the Non-jurors, who was then Library-keeper of the University, for disaffection to the King. When the prosecution had advanced some way, he resigned his office; whereupon all further proceedings were closed: here the Government party charged Dr. Gooch with disloyalty, on the score of his forbearance and lenity to the accused. An appeal was also presented to the Vice-chancellor in capacity of Visitor of Corpus-Christi College, against the Master, who had pre-elected his son,

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

William Bradford, to a fellowship, in a College Meeting, at which only four of the twelve Fellows were present: but before he could deliver his judgment, Dr. Bradford (who was about this time made Bishop of Carlisle) obtained an order from the King in Council, prohibiting his further proceedings; and the dispute was made up in the society. Nor was this the only occasion on which the Government showed a disposition to countenance their adherents in the University. Dr. Sherlock and Dr. Snape having given umbrage by their zeal in favour of the High-church party, both in Convocation and in the Bangorian Controversy, their names had been erased from the list of King's Chaplains. It was now thought that the activity of Dr. Gooch merited a similar disgrace; he was accordingly deprived of his chaplaincy; and to make this expression of displeasure more pointed, Mr. Bull, who had just suffered by his sentence, was constituted King's Chaplain in his room.²⁴

Dr. Gooch
deprived of
his chap-
laincy to the
King.

Bentley
quarrels
with the
Vice-chan-
cellor.

Dr. Middleton having announced to the Vice-chancellor his resolution to institute a process against Dr. Bentley, that officer endeavoured to procure a termination of the business, by advising the Professor to return the four guineas. Although a personal friend of Middleton, and participating in the dislike of Bentley felt by all his party, Dr. Gooch acted in the outset of this affair as became a person in his station, anxious to save the University and the Church from the scandal of such a dignified character being involved in so paltry a proceeding. He held many conversations with the Professor, and as an argument

²⁴ Bull's opponent, Mr. John Warde, shortly afterwards experienced far more valuable patronage from the hands of the University; who presented him to the large living of Simonburn in Northumberland; the advowson of which belonged to a papist.

to induce him to give up the point, plainly told him that if the matter came into his Court, he must decide it against him. This intimation, joined with the fact of his intimacy and frequent communication with his adversary, convinced Bentley that he had no prospect of a favourable decision during the Vice-chancellorship of Dr. Gooch : he chose, therefore, to take such a course as might at least postpone the matter ; and continued to flatter himself with the hope of Government interfering in his behalf. Once, however, he did yield so far as to send the four guineas to be placed in the hands of the Vice-chancellor ; but he happening to be out at the moment, they were brought back by the messenger : in the meantime the Doctor's mind was altered, and he was fixed in his unfortunate resolution to pursue a contest, from which, whatever might be the decision, neither credit nor advantage could accrue—

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos.

He would have been satisfied indeed to have got out of the dispute, could that have been effected without the appearance of a defeat ; for on one occasion he said to Gooch, that ‘ he would end the dispute as the Germans and Turks had done, with a *uti possidetis*.’ But on being told that the complainant demanded the decree (which is in fact an arrest, the first step in the action), and that it could no longer in justice be refused, he cautioned the Vice-chancellor how he proceeded to arrest a Doctor without the consent of nine Heads of colleges. Upon this a meeting of the Heads was summoned, the statutes examined, and a determination made and published, that in case of a civil action a Doctor possessed no exemption or privilege different from other

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

members of the University. The Vice-chancellor immediately wrote to Bentley, communicating this interpretation, and again begging him to reconsider the matter, and to end the dispute without bringing it into Court. This letter was answered by the professor in person, who called at Caius Lodge, and in high terms expostulated with Gooch, saying, among other things which gave offence, that ' he would not be judged by him and his friends over a bottle.' His own statement is, that he was treated with incivility by Gooch, who remained seated, while he was left standing, during the whole of the visit. This fact, which was stated in print and not contradicted, may serve as a curious illustration of the importance assumed in those days by official rank ; though it does seem amazing that a gentleman, described as possessing courtly manners, could have so demeaned himself to one considerably his senior in years, and immeasurably his superior in all other particulars, except the ephemeral office with which he happened to be invested.

Offends the
other
Heads.

It may here be mentioned, that Dr. Bentley had given personal offence to many of his brethren the Heads, partly by contemptuous expressions, and partly by the nicknames which he was said to bestow upon them. Tradition reports that at some meeting, where, after a question had been long discussed, Dr. Ashton observed, that ' it was not yet quite clear to him,' the Master of Trinity briskly demanded, ' are we then to wait here till your mud has subsided?' The Vice-chancellor he termed ' the empty *gotch* of Caius;' while to Sherlock, whom he found to be the real mover and manager of every thing in the University, he gave the title of Cardinal Alberoni: an appellation which appeared so appropriate that it adhered to him long after its origin had been

forgotten. This contemptuous treatment of his brother Heads may account for their combining to crush the Master of Trinity; a fact which might otherwise be extraordinary; as the *esprit de corps* in that order is generally observed to prevail over party feeling, whenever those two impulses are brought into collision. Certain it is, that there never was a period at which the Heads less deserved to be held in disrespect; for of the whole number of sixteen, no less than eight were known to the world as scholars and divines of the first eminence: even at the present day the names of Bentley, Covell, Ashton, Jenkin, Bradford, Sherlock, Waterland, and Davies reflect lustre upon the University which claims them as her sons.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

After repeated postponements, a decree at length went forth from the Vice-chancellor, for arresting Dr. Bentley at the suit of Dr. Middleton; it was committed to Edward Clarke, one of the Esquire-beadles, who immediately proceeded with it to Trinity Lodge. The Master's behaviour towards this functionary constitutes the principal, or I may say, the only ground for the severe and extraordinary measures which ensued. He cavilled at the form and questioned the legality of the document; saying, that the King, and not the Vice-chancellor was his judge, and repeating that 'he would not be concluded by what he and four or five of his friends determined against him over a bottle:' having then asked for the arrest, he refused to give it back to Mr. Clarke, alleging 'that he had further occasion for it.' The beadle unwillingly left it in his hands; but he went next morning to reclaim his document, when Dr. Bentley positively refused to give it him at present. The Vice-chancellor being informed of this usage, issued another decree, which

Sept. 23,
1718.
Decree to
arrest Bentley.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Sept. 24.

Mr. Clarke carried to Trinity Lodge, but was denied admittance. The next day he went to complete the arrest, and got into the dining-room; when after a time, there came to him not the Master, but Dr. Ashenhurst with two other friends, Witton and Lisle, who demanded how he presumed to remain in another man's house without his leave? They then offered to give him back his decree, which however he declined to receive from any hands but Dr. Bentley's, and resolved not to leave the house without seeing him; whereupon Ashenhurst, not thinking it prudent to turn him out, locked the doors of the room upon him. Afterwards the Master's servant, having in vain desired him to depart, locked him up and left him a prisoner. Having remained in durance from two till six o'clock, he knocked and was let out of his confinement. Two days afterwards he tried again to execute his commission, but the Doctor would not be seen. Bentley's object in this strange proceeding was, as he afterwards avowed, to gain time, in order either to procure support from the Ministry, or obtain legal directions for his conduct. Clarke was all along told that he would consent to be arrested in a few days: but this zealous Lictor was not destined to have the glory of *hooking the Leviathan*, as he termed it; for he was himself arrested by a severe fit of the gout. In the meantime the Master of Trinity was said to make himself merry at his simplicity in parting with the arrest. The examination for fellowships being just then in progress, he gave as a theme to the candidates the following line:

“Ἀλλους ἐξενάριζ', ἀπὸ δ' Ἑκτορος ἴσχεο χεῖρας.

Oct. 1.

However, in a few days Attwood, one of the other

Beadles, waiting upon him on different business, Bentley asked whether he was not come to arrest him; saying he was now ready and expecting to be arrested. Thus invited, Attwood went and fetched from Clarke the decree which he had himself been unable to execute, and completed the arrest: Dr. Baker, one of the Fellows of Trinity, being bail for his appearance at the Court to be holden on the 3rd of October.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

In the meantime the Vice-chancellor held a consultation with all his brethren who were in the place; when it was resolved to curb the refractory spirit with which they had to deal, by the severest measures, and to revenge the slight put upon academical authority by the exercise of the strongest power with which the statutes have armed the chief magistrate for the maintenance of discipline and punishment of contumacy.

On the court-day Dr. Bentley sent, as his representative, Denys Lisle, a young civilian, lately made College Auditor and Registrar, who had shown extraordinary activity and zeal in promoting all his wishes and interests. He could have no doubt, after the intimation of the Vice-chancellor himself, that the result of the action would be against him; and there is reason to believe that he intended to have appealed against the decision, on the score of a prejudice in the mind of the judge²⁵. But the proceedings of the day were of a very different character from what he anticipated. The Vice-chancellor took his seat, along with six of the Heads as his assessors, Doctors Covell, Ashton, Adams, Lany, Jenkin, and Grigg; when Dr. Middleton, the plaintiff, appeared, and asked permission to name Mr.

Oct. 3.
Proceedings
of the Court.

²⁵ *Review of the Proceedings, &c.* p. 78.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Cook, as his proctor, to conduct his cause ; which was granted and registered : but no defendant appeared. Mr. Lisle declared himself commissioned to act as his proctor ; but the Vice-chancellor would not admit him in that character, because the defendant did not *in person* solicit it. This point, upon which the statutes are precise, could hardly have been overlooked by Bentley, who probably considered it as a mere technical form, not likely to be insisted upon. He thought that the arrest, having been satisfied by his putting in bail, was not to be regarded as a personal citation or summons. Proctor Cook then began to address the court, charging the defendant with contempt ; at the same time calling for the beadle's return to the first decree. Whereupon the Vice-chancellor, having previously sent Mr. Grove the Registry to take the deposition of Clarke, who was himself unable to attend, ordered it to be produced and read in court. This evidence gave a full detail of all the occurrences ; and although coloured and exaggerated by a person irritated by the joint action of resentment and gout, yet the main facts of the case, the detention of the decree, the confinement of the officer, and Bentley's expressions respecting the Vice-chancellor, admitted of no dispute. As soon as the deposition had been read, Middleton's proctor again addressed the court ; but the Vice-chancellor interrupted him, waving his hand, and saying that he postponed the cause for the present, and would consider Dr. Bentley's contempt of the authority and jurisdiction of the University, in calling a regular meeting of the Heads, to which he had himself been invited, ' the Vice-chancellor and his friends over a bottle.' He then consulted his assessors, who all agreed both as to the fact of contempt, and the propriety of inflicting the heaviest

Bentley
suspended
from his de-
grees.

punishment in the power of the court—a suspension of the offender from all his degrees. Immediately the Vice-chancellor, uncovering himself, pronounced, in solemn and awful terms, the judgment of the court—‘ that Richard Bentley was suspended *ab omni gradu suscepto*.’

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

This extraordinary act of power, though privately determined upon before-hand, struck with amazement the audience in the Consistory, who could scarcely believe the reality of the scene, when they heard such a punishment pronounced upon a Doctor of twenty-two years standing, who possessed the highest preferments, as well as the greatest literary reputation of the whole University. Dr. Gooch was not able to sustain the dignity which such an occasion demanded : while pronouncing the sentence, he trembled and turned pale, like a person alarmed at the magnitude of his own act. Mr. Lisle, who yielded to no man living in courage and assurance, immediately exclaimed against the hardship of punishing any one upon a charge to which he was not summoned to reply, and on evidence which he himself could in part refute : but the Vice-chancellor silenced him in an angry tone, threatening to ‘ suspend him also if he interfered ;’ saying that there was no reason to disbelieve the beadle, as he had himself heard similar language from Dr. Bentley : he added, with much warmth, “ Go, tell your friend from me, that if he does not come and make his submission and acknowledge his fault within three days, I will declare his professorship vacant.” Having then ordered the proceedings to be recorded by the Registry, he dissolved the court.

As soon as tidings of this blow were carried to Bentley, he resolved to appeal from the sentence of the court to the Delegates ; and the next morning

His appeal
refused.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

sent Lisle to lodge his appeal, drawn up and attested in a legal form, with the senior proctor Sympson, whose duty it was to inhibit the Vice-chancellor from all proceedings pending the appeal. The proctor went, along with the registrary, to Dr. Gooch, who was at first startled at this step, which he had not expected ; but he presently maintained that no appeal lay against a sentence for contempt of court, and peremptorily refused to allow it ; nor did the two officers, both of whom participated in the feelings of the prevailing party, attempt to oppose the decision of the chief magistrate.

The Master of Trinity next sent Lisle to the Vice-chancellor to enquire the meaning and consequence of the sentence pronounced upon him. Dr. Gooch's reply to these queries seems sufficiently laconic and pithy : ' the meaning was, that Bentley had now no degree in the University ; the consequence would be, that unless Bentley came to the court, acknowledged his fault, owned the justice of his sentence, and prayed for its reversal, he would declare his professorship vacant : ' adding, ' that he would not admit of any defence.'

Prohibited
from acting
as Professor.

The Vice-chancellor held two courts on the 7th and 9th of October, for the sole purpose of giving the suspended Doctor an opportunity of making his submission, and having his sentence reversed ; but no Bentley appeared. On the latter of those days it is ordered by the statutes that the Regius Professor of Divinity shall preach at St. Mary's a Latin sermon *ad clerum* ; and Bentley sent to apprise the Beadle Attwood that he should perform that duty in person. Dr. Gooch being informed of his intention, despatched the Lictor to caution him that none but graduates could ascend the pulpit, and that he would not suffer him to officiate. Being requested to declare in writ-

ing that he prohibited the performance of a duty prescribed by the statutes, he declined ; but he forbade the bell to be rung, or the doors of the church to be opened.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Dr. Gooch and his counsellors were now embarrassed at the predicament into which they had thrown themselves. Under the impression that they had an extraordinary personage to deal with, they had judged that measures of unusual vigour were requisite to humble his spirit, and calculated that the fear of losing his rank and preferment would certainly and immediately reduce him to submission. But when they found themselves mistaken, and saw the object of their severity braving all consequences with calmness, they felt themselves uneasy, and began to consider whether so sudden and vigorous a resort to extreme measures admitted of justification. The only ground upon which Bentley's punishment could rest was the deposition of Beadle Clarke : as for the failure of his personal appearance in court after he had given bail, that was a circumstance commonly overlooked in actions of debt, or if noticed at all, was only punishable by the forfeiture of the bail. The fact therefore was, that he had been convicted and sentenced upon a charge of which he had no notice, unsummoned and unheard, without opportunity of disproving, or explaining, or apologizing for the alleged contempt. Whatever might be the opinion of his conduct in the affair of the fee, it was hard to vindicate so plain a deviation from the common maxims of law and equity as these proceedings presented. To add to the embarrassment, the Vice-chancellor had committed himself by a public threat, which he dared not execute, of declaring the professorship vacant. The Heads therefore were anxious to change their position, and obtain the countenance

The Heads
embarrassed at
their own
measure.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

Apply to
the Duke of
Somerset.

Oct. 12.
The Chan-
cellor comes
to Cam-
bridge.

Refuses
Bentley's
submission.

Oct. 13.

and support of superior authority. For this purpose they applied to the Duke of Somerset, whom the sports of Newmarket had brought into the vicinity of his University. At their instance the Chancellor came over on a Sunday to Caius Lodge, where he dined with the Heads between the two services at St. Mary's. Bentley being on his part sufficiently desirous of getting out of his awkward predicament, if that could be done with honour, availed himself of this opportunity to invite the Duke to Trinity Lodge, and at the same time to offer submission to his Grace, and his authority, for the alleged contempt. This proposal the Duke not only declined but ridiculed in presence of the Heads. The Master next sent Dr. Baker to propose that Dr. Gooch and himself might appear face to face before his Grace. The Duke merely replied, that 'he did not come to Cambridge to try the Vice-chancellor.' Bentley made a third attempt, by offering to wait upon the Chancellor at Clare Hall Lodge, and there to make his unconditional submission: his Grace, who entered entirely into the feelings of the Heads respecting their delinquent brother, answered, that 'the injury had been done to the Vice-chancellor, and to him the submission must be made.' In the afternoon he held a consultation with the Heads, and offered to preside at the court, which was to be held on the following day, for the purpose of giving one more chance to the great culprit. Had he done so, it is probable that Bentley would have appeared, and the business might have been terminated. But the academical aristocracy, satisfied with the Duke's unqualified approbation of their proceedings, were not desirous that his personal interference should be carried any further.

The next morning, the Chancellor having left the University, Dr. Gooch sent the Registry to inform

the Master of Trinity that a third court was to be held that day, for the purpose of receiving his submission ; adding, that he should wait for it no longer. Bentley enquired, what kind of submission was expected, whether to the justice of the accusation, or of the sentence, or both ; he was told that ‘ he must come into the Court, acknowledge his fault in the contempt offered to its jurisdiction, ask pardon, and beg to be restored to his degrees.’ To this intimation he returned no reply ²⁶.

The tribunal assembled at the appointed hour, but the suspended doctor was not there. At the suggestion of Dean Sherlock, who was one of the assessors, Richard Bentley was summoned by name. The Vice-chancellor then declared ‘ that he would deliberate on preserving the jurisdiction of the University,’ and dissolved the court.

The Heads having certain misgivings as to the legality and propriety of what had been done, and knowing that the suspension might be reversed by another Vice-chancellor, found it expedient that the matter should not rest where it then was ; and a meeting was held at the lodge of Dr. Richardson, the Master of St. Peter’s College, who was prevented by ill health from leaving his apartment. This gentleman having great experience and knowledge of academical laws and customs, was much referred to by his brethren on occasions of emergency. It was here proposed to pass a sentence of expulsion upon the refractory Master ; but more cautious counsels prevailed. The Heads determined to engage the whole body of the Senate to adopt the proceedings as their own, by passing a grace for taking away his degrees. The Senate is not a Court of Justice, but possesses an

²⁶ Minute by Mr. Grove, in the Registry’s office.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

extensive and undefined power ; and this act was intended to resemble a Bill of Attainder, by means of which the Legislature sometimes takes upon itself to inflict punishments, which Courts of Justice cannot or will not sanction. This idea seems to have originated with Dr. Richardson, the same person by whom it has been mentioned that Dr. Bentley was married. By this shrewd and ingenious plan it was designed that the Suspension should merge in the Degradation, and the responsibility of the act be shared by the whole body of the University.

Oct. 16.

The Vice-chancellor was accordingly desired to prepare a grace for taking away Dr. Bentley's degrees : and a Congregation was assembled. But when the Caput was called, Dr. Waller, the representative of the medical faculty, being out of town, Dr. Ashenhurst stepped in and supplied his place. Hereupon the Vice-chancellor, knowing that he would quash the whole measure by his *veto*, kept back the grace which he had ready to produce ; and after mentioning some other business, dissolved the Congregation.

Oct. 17.

Grace for
the degra-
dation of
Dr. Bentley.

On the following day the Senate was reassembled ; precautions having been taken by the party of the Heads to secure the attendance of a Caput favourable to their views. As the measure itself was without precedent, so the mode of proposing it to the body was unusual. The Vice-chancellor commenced the proceedings by convoking the two Houses, and delivering to them a Latin speech ; opening and enlarging upon the offence committed by Dr. Bentley. He next ordered the deposition of the beadle, Clarke, to be read ; and then proposed to the Senate the following grace :

“ Cum Reverendus Vir, RICHARDUS BENTLEY, Collegii Trinitatis Magister, ad summos in hac Universitate Titulos et Honores vestro

favore dudum promotus, adeo se immemorem et loci sui et vestrae autoritatis dederit, ut debite summonitus ad comparendum et respondendum in causa coram Procancellario obedientiam recusaverit, Ministrum Universitatis summonentem indignis modis tractaverit, Procancellarium et Capita Collegiorum opprobriis impetiverit, jurisdictionem denique Universitatis, longo usu, Regiis Chartis, et autoritate Parlamenti stabilitam pro nihilo habendam esse declaraverit; cumque idem RICHARDUS BENTLEY super his causis ab omni Gradu suspensus fuerit, et postea per tres dies juridicos expectatus comparere tamen neglexerit; Placeat vobis ut dictus RICHARDUS BENTLEY ab omni Gradu, Titulo et Jure in hac Universitate deiciatur et excludatur."

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

This grace being laid before the Caput, an ingenious attempt was made by the Professor's ever active friends to arrest its progress. Dr. Otway, one of the members, was suspected to be a Non-juror: could he have been removed, Dr. James Johnson of Trinity Hall, a warm partizan of Bentley, would have stepped in and negatived the grace. Accordingly Ashenhurst and Bull went up and required the Vice-chancellor, as a magistrate, to tender the Oaths to Dr. Otway. But he, regarding this an impertinent and malicious interruption of the business of the University, sent them back to their places with anger and menaces.

Efforts of
his friends
in his fa-
vour.

Dr. Otway.

The Caput now sanctioned the measure with their approval; though there was one individual of that body whom the reader will be surprised to find engaged in such a business. This was Jeremiah Markland, one of the most justly celebrated scholars of the eighteenth century, who in the opinion of some takes his rank in the class after Bentley; upon whose model his critical taste and skill were formed. He was at that time a young man, Fellow of Peterhouse, and happened to represent the Regent Masters in the Caput. Many a scholar might have envied the opportunity which fortune thus cast in his way, of saving by his single voice the great hero of lite-

Markland.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

rature from the unseemly fate that awaited him. But in the heat and clamour of that day, the voice of learning had little chance of being heard.

The Senate
deprives
him of his
Degrees.

At the second Congregation, in the afternoon, the question of Degradation was proposed to the votes of the Senate at large. Great efforts were made by both parties for this struggle. It is important to record that, whatever might have been his conduct in his college, of all the Fellows of Trinity there were but four (one of whom was Dr. Colbatch) that took part against their Master on this occasion. His friend Dr. Laughton had interest enough to bring six of his brother Fellows from Clare Hall to his assistance. But from the other colleges there were few who voted in his favour: in addition to party and personal feelings, the statements just laid before them by the Vice-chancellor inflamed their resentment against Bentley. Several however declined taking any part in a question which involved so much personal acrimony. But on the votes being taken, the grace for degrading Dr. Bentley was carried in the Non-regents' House by 46 voices against 15; and in the Regents' by 62 against 35.

This unexampled measure was thus effected by more than a double majority: among the dignitaries of the University, a still greater proportion was found on the side of severity. An eye-witness records that a greater display of scarlet robes appeared in the Senate-house on this day, than ever had been seen in the memory of man²⁷: of thirty Doctors present, no

²⁷ *Rud's Diary*. Rud, who had become D.D. the preceding year, and was himself one of the 50 who voted in favour of Dr. Bentley, would appear from the following remarks not to have been greatly mortified at the catastrophe. "So the great Dr. Bentley was reduced to be a bare Harry-Soph, being not able to gain above 50 votes in the whole University; though a great many did indeed stay away, that they might not offend him by voting against him; yet 108 appeared against him."

less than twenty-three voted for the degradation of their brother; and of ten Heads of colleges, all but one joined in the same cause²⁸.

CHAP.
XIII.
1718.

²⁸ The single Head who voted in Bentley's favour, I conclude to have been Davies, the President of Queen's. Bradford and Waterland were out of the University during the whole of the proceedings.

CHAPTER XIV.

Bentley petitions the King against the University—Gooch re-elected Vice-chancellor—Lays an account of the University proceedings before the King in Council—Matter referred to a committee of the Privy Council—Pamphlets by A. A. Sykes—Sherlock—Middleton—Bentley's own Tract against Middleton and Miller—Agitation of the University—Pretended plots against Dr. Gooch—The Fellows of Trinity renew their exertions to procure a hearing for their Petition—Lord Chancellor Parker's promises—The Petition again read in Council—Bentley concludes a treaty with Serjeant Miller—It is at first rejected by the Seniority—Dr. Baker procures signatures in favour of Bentley's scheme—The bargain is ratified by the Seniors—Arguments for and against the transaction—Subsequent history of Miller—Bishop Fleetwood again refuses to interfere—Abuses of the Master's authority—Appeal to the Visitor by Charles Squire—Middleton writes a pamphlet against Bentley's College government—It is censured by the Seniority—Bentley's attempt against Colbatch—Prosecutes the Publisher—Middleton confesses the authorship—Is prosecuted—Colbatch claims the vacant rectory of Orwell—The struggle between him and the Master—Bentley obliged to give way—Humphreys admitted Fellow—Lectures on the Catechism, &c.—Treatment of Malled and Craister—Bouquet—The design of a Royal Visitation of the University abandoned—Dr. Gooch elected a third time Vice-chancellor—Application to the Court of King's Bench to deprive Bentley of his Professorship—Election of M.P. for the University.

CHAP.
XIV.
1718.

THE reader having seen with what alacrity Bentley sometimes embarked in disputes where no necessity urged him, will be prepared to find a still more stormy course of events, now that he was compelled to maintain a struggle against exasperated enemies, who were determined to allow him no quarter. The blow already struck was severe, and its effects permanent; for the infliction of such a censure by a great majority of his University, as had never before been passed on a man of dignified station, was a blemish to his reputation which no time or circum-

stances could altogether efface. But nature had given him strong nerves and an intrepid spirit; and though sometimes carried away by temper, he never lost his acuteness in detecting error, or weakness in the cause of an adversary.

When the news reached him of the vote passed for his Degradation, he observed, 'I have rubbed through many a worse business than this¹;' and immediately drew up a petition to the King, as supreme Visitor, briefly stating the facts, and complaining that he had been suspended from his degrees by the Vice-chancellor, without hearing or summons, and inhibited from discharging his duty as Regius Professor; adding the refusal of the Vice-chancellor to administer the oaths to Dr. Otway, as well as the grace of the Senate by which he stood degraded and excluded from all rank in the University, and praying redress for these grievances. His petition met with readier attention than that of the Fellows of Trinity, being read at the Council-board on the 30th of October, and an order being made by the King that the Vice-chancellor should attend the board on the 6th of November with an account of the proceedings.

The office of Vice-chancellor annually terminates on the third of November. This summons gave Bentley's adversaries a good pretext to re-elect Dr. Gooch for a second year. In the earlier times of the University it had not been unusual for the same person to be chosen Vice-chancellor twice or thrice in succession; but there had been no such instance for several years. The turn now came in its rotation to Dr. Davies, the devoted friend of Bentley; to whom his brethren naturally were unwilling at this

CHAP.
XIV.
1718.

Bentley
petitions
the King
against the
University.

Gooch re-
elected
Vice-chan-
cellor.

¹ *Middleton's Full and Impartial Account, &c.*

CHAP.
XIV.
1718.

moment to entrust the office². They, therefore, nominated Dr. Gooch and Dr. Davies for the votes of the Senate: the partizans of Bentley supported the latter, but the Tories returned Gooch with their usual majority of two to one³.

Lays an account of the University proceedings before the King in Council.

The Vice-chancellor immediately on his re-election went up to present his statement to the King in Council. The account which he gives of the transactions distinctly attributes Bentley's Suspension to his non-appearance in the action for debt; a ground which was the weakest that could have been taken. In order to obviate all enquiry into the legality of this exercise of power, he takes care to inform his Majesty that 'the Suspension was sunk in the Degradation;' and adds, 'The said Vice-chancellor humbly conceives that he is not personally answerable for an act of the body corporate of the University of Cambridge, whereof he is but one member:' which last sentence unintentionally reveals the real motive that suggested the grace for Degradation. The complaint which Bentley had artfully advanced against him, of refusing to administer the Oaths to Dr. Otway, Gooch answers at some length; and satisfactorily shows that this was no ground for charging him with disaffection to the Government.

Matter referred to a committee of the Privy Council.

The pressure of political business prevented the Privy Council entering further into this academical dispute at that moment; but in the following month they referred the consideration of the business to a committee of their body, and a general opinion prevailed that the result would be a Royal commission to visit the University, and enquire into and redress

² Dr. Bradford, the Master of Corpus-Christi, being just raised to the bishoprick of Carlisle, was, according to the practice of the University, exempt from the vice-chancellorship.

³ The numbers were: Dr. Gooch 122, Dr. Davies 60. *Attwood's Diary*.

all abuses and grievances. The Whigs were much elated at the prospect of seeing their opponents humbled; while in the other party there was a disposition to question whether such a power could legally be exerted by the crown. A certain degree of uneasiness exhibited itself likewise at Oxford: an apprehension was entertained of the Royal commission being extended to that University; and there were thoughts of questioning, if necessary, the validity of that kind of jurisdiction⁴.

CHAP.
XIV.
1718.

In the meantime this extraordinary feud attracted the attention and divided the opinions of the whole kingdom. The reputation of the parties concerned, the unparalleled character of the transactions, and the public questions likely to grow out of the dispute, all concurred to make this a topic of extreme interest. The subject presently became one of party, and persons' sentiments upon it were different according to their political bias. While the Tories exclaimed against the arrogance and insolence of Bentley, for which they considered him justly punished, the Whigs contended that the whole proceeding was the effect of disappointed party malice; that the real offence for which he had been deprived, was his being leader of the ministerialists in the University; and that the conduct of the Vice-chancellor and his abettors had been arbitrary, oppressive, unjust, and such as ought not to be tolerated in a free country. Lawyers very generally demurred to the legality of the measures employed in his overthrow. The prosecutors and judges now found that they had to defend themselves at the bar of public opinion; and the war of pamph-

⁴ These apprehensions are mentioned in a letter to Bishop Smalridge, dated Feb. 10, 1718-19, preserved in the Bodleian Library; also in a letter from G. Clarke, Dec. 9, 1718, in the same collection.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

lets, which we have seen so repeatedly excited in the discussion of Bentley's merits, recommenced with uncommon vigour and asperity.

Pamphlets
by A. A.
Sykes.

The attack was begun by Mr. Arthur Ashley Sykes, whose acquaintance with Bentley we have already had occasion to mention. His residence in the vicinity of Cambridge had given him particular and accurate information respecting the various transactions; and he was induced to come forward in this cause from his devotion to the interests of the Low-church party, against whom he thought that a blow had been struck in the oppressive usage experienced by the Divinity Professor. This unwearied polemic, whose whole life may be termed one long altercation, had scarcely ceased from his labours in the Bangorian Controversy, when this new dispute invited his co-operation. He probably felt that another opportunity was here afforded for pointing his weapons at Dean Sherlock, who in the late protracted combat, had been the especial object of his hostility. Accordingly, after the Suspension of the Master of Trinity, Sykes addressed a letter to the St. James's Post, giving a detailed account of the proceedings of the Vice-chancellor; and a second upon the Degradation, complaining in strong language of the injustice and tyranny with which the great scholar and professor had been treated. With some allowance for the spirit of party, his statements and arguments are as fair as could be expected from a professed advocate in the heat of the moment. They were generally read, and it being found that a reply was indispensable, the powerful pen of Sherlock was called forth to defend the conduct of the academical aristocracy, of which he was himself believed to be the main-spring. He immediately gave the world his own narrative and view of the affair in a pamphlet, called 'The Pro-

Sherlock.

ceedings of the Vice-chancellor and University of Cambridge against Dr. Bentley, Stated and Vindicated. In a Letter to a Noble Peer.' The Dean here displays all the art of an experienced controversialist in making the affair of Bentley's demand of the fee a prominent feature in his statement. That matter had in reality nothing to do with the Suspension or Degradation, nor any bearing upon the merits of either; but as it happened to have led to those proceedings, and was strongly calculated to prejudice liberal minds against the Professor, it is made the leading topic of the letter and placed in the most invidious light. He then makes the most of the inflammatory matter in the Beadle's deposition, and prepares the public for further measures intended to deprive Bentley of his professorship. A continuation was promised of the defence of the University proceedings; but Sherlock found himself relieved from that task by an able, willing, and persevering combatant.

Conyers Middleton being the original author of the Middleton. feud which so greatly agitated the University and interested the public, felt himself called upon to vindicate the conduct of the majority, who had so readily embraced his cause. This distinguished writer was not one of those who are early familiar with the press; his present pamphlet happens to be the first published specimen of a style which for elegance, purity, and ease, yields to none in the whole compass of English literature. In this first essay he showed himself to possess all the talents, and to understand the use of all the weapons of a controversialist. The acrimonious and resentful feeling which prompted every line is in some measure disguised by the pleasing language, the harmony of the periods, and the vein of scholarship which enlivens the whole tract. Middleton's management of the subject is uncommonly artful.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

While he pretends to vindicate the proceedings of the University, he is in fact only endeavouring to hold up Dr. Bentley in odious and detestable colours. He not only dwells largely upon the business of the fee, as if that were the real question at issue, but refers to all the instances of his College government, and public conduct, which he thinks best calculated to raise a prejudice against him. His pamphlet is termed ‘A Full and Impartial Account of all the late Proceedings in the University of Cambridge against Dr. Bentley :’ but to the epithet *impartial*, its claim goes no further than the title page. It breathes the most violent personal resentment ; and the manifest object of the writer was to ruin the reputation and fortunes of his adversary. Its partiality is conspicuous in the compliments bestowed on his friend Gooch’s dignified, equitable, and dispassionate conduct ; which commendations are not borne out even by his own narrative of the transactions. Having already put the reader in possession of all the facts, carefully sifted from the opposite statements in this controversy, it will be needless for me to cite specimens of Middleton’s account ; but the following sentences will show the bitter spirit, as well as the powerful language in which this new antagonist assailed the Master of Trinity. Speaking of the Divinity professorship, he says :

“ For besides, that its forfeiture might be fairly argued from his present want of degrees ; that by its foundation it is made inconsistent and incompatible with the mastership of Trinity College ; that he obtained it by bullying, and holds it by violence : besides all this, I say, as the statute has made it a necessary qualification of a Professor, that he have no blemish or infamy upon his character, I would desire no other foundation to prove the necessity of his being ejected. He has been publicly accused by his Fellows of many great crimes, which he never has nor can clear himself of. And his trial which never came to a sentence, has left the marks of

such an infamy upon him, as by all the notions which the civil or canon law has of it, would be sufficient not only to incapacitate him from being chosen Professor, but to deprive him when in possession.” —*Full and Impartial Account*, &c. p. 21.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

“ But even this will hardly seem strange from him, who dares to give out, that the King and his Ministry will interpose to reverse our statutable proceedings against him; that for the sake of a single person so justly odious, so void of all credit and interest amongst us, his Majesty will set a mark of his displeasure upon his famous and loyal University. But it is to be hoped that an insolence so criminal, so apparently tending to alienate the affections of his people from his Majesty, may meet with the just severity and chastisement of the law.”—*Ibid.* p. 34.

“ Thus fell the Great Bentley from all his degrees amongst us; a sacrifice, as his writer says, to ‘the madness of the people,’ but, as I have plainly shewn, to his own;

Quos Jupiter vult perdere dementat prius.

His conduct will bear me out in the application, and shews the plain marks of a judgment and infatuation upon him. By the restoring of four guineas, which he had shamefully extorted, he might have saved himself the great trouble and expense which his obstinacy has involved him in. By an easy, and perhaps private submission, he might have saved himself the shame of this public disgrace: but for the glory of never having been known to submit, he has risked not only his credit, but, what is much dearer to him, his preferments, on the quarrel. By this censure, which now lies upon him, he stands actually incapacitated both for his mastership and professorship; by his own rashness he has at once brought upon himself, what all the petitions and remonstrances of his College could never effect:

—*quod optanti divūm promittere nemo*

Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro.—*Ibid.* p. 39.

“ We may strip him of his titles, but we never can, we see, of his insolence; he has ceased to be Doctor, and may cease to be Professor, but he can never cease to be Bentley. There he will triumph over the University to the last; all its learning being unable to polish, its manners to soften, or its discipline to tame the superior obstinacy of his genius.”—*Ibid.* p. 42.

“ There is something so singularly rude and barbarous in his way of treating all mankind, that whoever has occasion to relate it, will, instead of aggravating, find himself obliged to qualify and soften the harshness of his story, lest it should pass for incredible.”—*Ibid.*

CHAP. "To observe a decency and complaisance towards him who has
XIV. no notion of it, would be interpreted only as the cowardice or weak-
1719. ness of his adversary. A controversy with him must always be a
fighting without quarter: for it is but necessary not to give any,
where you are sure of finding none."—*Ibid.* p. 43.

Sykes immediately replied to his own opponents in a third and fourth letter in the *St. James's Post*. He now vindicated Bentley's conduct respecting the fee, as far as it was capable of defence, and by comparing the circumstances of Grigg, of Gooch himself, and of other officers receiving similar fees, contended that the outcry raised against the Divinity Professor's demand was the result of party malice, or personal dislike. Aware that the weakness of his adversaries lay in the want of distinct authority in law, statute, or precedent for their proceedings, he grapples with this part of the subject, and shows that on this head their vindication was incomplete; and consequently, that his original complaint against the transactions remained unanswered.

These letters being published, along with their two predecessors, in the form of a pamphlet, called 'The Case of Dr. Bentley Truly Stated,' were answered by Dr. Middleton, in 'A Second Part of the Full and Impartial Account of all the late Proceedings;' to which all the remarks made upon the first are applicable: the tone is indeed even more confident and overbearing, from the applause which his former publication had met with, and the effect which he saw that it was producing. There is shown the same talent for saying sarcastic and bitter things in polished and even eloquent language; the tone, whether of irony or invective, is perfectly sustained; and there is hardly a sentence which is not calculated to inflict a wound upon his adversary's character. He again rakes up the most invidious stories with

which either memory or hearsay could supply him, to blacken his reputation for honour and honesty. His severity is now not confined to Bentley, but is shared by those friends who ventured to take a prominent part in his favour, Johnson, Ashenhurst, Bull, Lisle, and his literary champion Sykes. Of this the two following specimens will suffice :

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

“ A certain angry Doctor of ours, learned in the law, [Johnson] ‘ had rather,’ he says, ‘ live under the Great Turk, than under the power exercised by our Vice-chancellors ;’ yet he has already spent the best part of his life under it, and is himself an infallible proof of its mildness and lenity : but let him go whenever he pleases, our Church will lose no credit by his turning Mahometan.”—*Second Part of the Full and Impartial Account, &c.* p. 17.

“ If Mr. Bentley indeed has a mind to be tried upon the foot of a Tory, we will readily join issue, and find proof enough to convict him ; especially if Dr. Ashenhurst would but turn evidence against him, as I am confident he will, when the Court has once dropped him : this sole favourite of his, though he has taken the Oaths himself, yet for the respect he declares for Nonjurors, has taken withal a resolution never to accept any fees from them, and he hopes, as he says, that the one will atone for the other ; but I know how he will come off from this, by telling us that it was in pure zeal to King George that he insinuated himself into their favour ; it being the surest way of destroying his enemies by making himself their physician.”—*Ibid.* p. 26.

Sykes rejoined in another pamphlet, termed ‘ The Case of Dr. Bentley Further Stated ;’ in which he resolved to repel the personalities of his antagonist by a similar species of warfare ; and accordingly brought up the ridiculous story of Dr. Laughton having, when Proctor, invaded the political party assembled at the Rose tavern, eight or nine years before. It may be recollected that among the persons whom that over-zealous officer accused of breaking the discipline of the University, were Mr. Middleton and Mr. Gooch ; which individuals were no other than the present prosecutor and present

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

judge of Dr. Bentley. Sykes judged it fair to remind those who now pretended such a regard for discipline, and urged the necessity of upholding it by the severest penalties, how differently they had themselves been treated when guilty of a real violation of the laws of the University. But it appears amazing that an experienced controversialist could commit so palpable an error. Laughton's complaint was so frivolous, and his conduct on that occasion so extravagant, that it was scarcely possible to speak of it with gravity ; and to revive the memory of such an affair was not the act of a judicious friend. This provoked a third pamphlet from Middleton, wherein his tremendous powers of invective are exerted to their full extent upon his adversary Sykes ; at the same time he exposes with much dignity the weakness and folly of those who would attack the characters of Gooch and himself on such paltry grounds.

“ It was to little purpose for the author to conceal his name, for every soul who could get through a page or two, cried out presently, it must be Sykes :

Ubi ubi est, diu celari non potest.

Nature, which in kindness to the world has set a mark upon his countenance, has given us infallible ones of his productions. Wherever you find a writer surprisingly trifling and dull, glorying in never being in the right, discovering an antipathy to Church and University, with a special malice to Dr. Sherlock, the principal champion and ornament of both, there's your man ; pronounce it to be Sykes ; you need not be afraid of counterfeits. When the work is too foul and scandalous for any other man to engage in, Sykes is a sure card, that never fails his friend in distress.

Cum nemini obtrudi potest, itur ad me.

He always keeps himself in readiness for service ; and like a famous lawyer I have heard of, can be advocate or evidence, as occasion requires ; and as a true dragoon, fights either a-foot or on horse-back. It has been wondered at by some, how a man, who had no

relation to or business in the University, no particular acquaintance or friendship with the Professor, could, out of pure love to wrangling, thrust himself into a controversy, which he had not the least concern in. But there is, it must be owned, another good reason very obvious; his friend Ashenhurst had been roughly handled by me; and that was touching him in a tender part; there his own character was nearly concerned; for if tale-bearing and informing could once be brought into discredit and contempt, his business was done at once, and all his parts and talents made useless and unserviceable. Ashenhurst and Sykes are terms convertible, that have always signified the same thing in the University;

————— *Par nobile fratrum*
Nequitia et nugis, pravorum et amore gemellum.

Their names are proverbs in every College, to give at once a full and adequate idea of a disturber of the peace of the Society, and an accuser of his brethren."—*Some Remarks upon a Pamphlet, &c.* p. 6.

Of the invective just quoted, the part intended to be most cutting was the identification of Sykes with Ashenhurst, whose acquaintance he could not be proud of acknowledging.

A strong expectation prevailed at that moment that a Royal mandate for the restoration of Bentley's degrees would be forthwith sent to the University; and we find from this tract that the party of the Heads talked loudly of their determination to refuse compliance.

"To tell us of his being redressed, without making a satisfaction suitable to his offence, is to talk to us like children: we know ourselves and constitution too well to believe that we can ever be obliged to it. We are threatened indeed every day with the expectation of a Royal mandate to re-establish him; and he himself, I hear, gives assurances of it to his friends; if ever we should receive such an one, we shall hardly be at a loss how to behave ourselves with a becoming duty and regard to it; we should use it, without doubt, with the utmost reverence and respect. But should we obey it without reserve or hesitation, before the law has convinced us that we are in duty bound to do it, his Majesty himself would, I

CHAP. dare say, have the worse opinion of us ; the world, I am sure, would
XIV. despise us for it."—*Some Remarks upon a Pamphlet, &c.* p. 24.
1719.

All the publications in this controversy were anonymous. But people being just then familiar with the writings of Sherlock and Sykes, their hands were at once detected. Middleton, being a new writer, was not known till he himself acknowledged his first tract, when he found how well it was received by the public⁵. In point of literary merit in this contest, the palm is unquestionably due to Middleton ; but it is equally certain that in Sykes's pamphlets the arguments are sounder, and the representation of facts more just and candid. The reason is, that the latter embarked in the question merely as the advocate of a party ; his design was to represent Bentley's case in the fairest light, and say all that he thought could justly be urged in his favour ; and at the same time to oppose on public grounds the arbitrary and oppressive proceedings of his adversaries. Middleton's views, on the contrary, were directed against Bentley as a man whom he personally hated, and for whose destruction the present crisis seemed to afford an opportunity. It was accident alone that united him with the High-church party, for whose principles he cared nothing, and regarded them only as far as they were auxiliaries in his cause. The consequence is, that his writings will

⁵ Mr. Zachary Pearce, on the perusal of that pamphlet, was convinced that the author was Dr. Colbatch, to whom he wrote a letter of compliments on the occasion. He had himself communicated to the Doctor the anecdote of Bentley having said to Dr. Hare, the Dean of Worcester, "*I am your Pope, your only New Testament is in my hands,*" which he found repeated in the same words in this publication. It had passed from Colbatch to Middleton. The three pamphlets are reprinted in the third edition of *Middleton's Miscellaneous Works*, in 4to. in 1752 ; but in the 8vo. edition they are omitted.

be found, on a dispassionate examination, not only deficient in fairness and candour, but replete with malignity and rancour.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

There still remains to be noticed one piece in this controversy; which, though anonymous, I have no hesitation in attributing to the aggrieved Professor himself. It had been expected that he would immediately on the Degradation have made his appeal to the public; but Bentley seeing his cause taken up by other hands, preferred in the first instance employing all his efforts to procure redress from the Crown, and accordingly went to London, where he was indefatigable in soliciting the influential persons in Government. When however he supposed the controversy between Sykes and Middleton had reached its limit, he thought fit to make his enemies feel the severity of his pen. Of this *Review of the Proceedings against Dr. Bentley*, one half is dedicated to repel the attacks of Dr. Middleton, and the other to expose the unfair reasoning and bad principles of his old enemy Serjeant Miller; whose book, after two years' silence, he now determined to censure.

Bentley's
own tract
against Mid-
dleton and
Miller.

As the pamphlet evidently originated in some degree with Bentley himself, and bore marks of his style, at the same time that it was greatly unworthy of him, it was conjectured that it might have been drawn up by one of his intimates, and under his own inspection. That it was written by another hand from his dictation, seems highly probable; but the style, the contemptuous tone of criticism, and the peculiar turn of wit, oblige me to believe the whole of this piece to have proceeded from Bentley. That its publication however was not superintended by him, is proved by the extreme carelessness with which it is printed. All his works show him to have been an accurate corrector of the press. In this.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

pamphlet the negligence of the printer seems to respond to the haste and slovenliness with which it was composed⁶. The object was to throw contempt upon the books of Middleton and of Miller, and to turn the authors into ridicule. In the case of the Serjeant, who was an awkward and embarrassed writer, the 'Review' frequently succeeds, and exhibits his strictures in a ludicrous light. Many of the censures are ingenious and humorous, but fall infinitely below what the author of the Remarks on Free-thinking was capable of producing; and the whole tone of the book is unfitting a learned, dignified, and ill-used divine. It must be allowed, however, that the treatment of Middleton and Miller, contemptuous and insulting as it is, exhibits a less rancorous spirit than may be found in their respective publications against Bentley.

Agitation of
the University.

The whole of this literary conflict was fought at the end of 1718 and beginning of 1719. In the meantime the feud among the Heads, with its various ramifications, kept the University in a state of unceasing agitation. The disputes of their superiors, as is generally the case, descended to the young men. Mr. Towers, of Christ College, the Senior

⁶ It is a remarkable instance of the inattentive manner in which this pamphlet was put forth, that it bears two distinct titles; that prefixed to the first page is, *An Account of Dr. Bentley's Case, in Answer to a pretended Full and Impartial Account, &c.* But before it was published, a different title-page was hit upon: *A Review of the Proceedings against Dr. Bentley in the University of Cambridge; in answer to a late pretended Full and Impartial Account, &c. With some Remarks upon Serjeant Miller's Account of that University; wherein the egregious Blunders of that Gentleman are briefly set forth.* 1719. The two mottoes, and the description of the author, bear marks of Bentley's humour:

"*Solventur risu tabule; tu missus abibis.*—Hor.

"*Ἀνεῖται ΑΥΔΗΤΗΡΟΙ θεοὶ νόον εἰσενέφυσαν,*

"*Ἄλλ' ἔμα τῷ φησὶν χῶ νόος ἐκπέτατο.*—Anthol. Epig.

"By N. O. M.A. of the same University."

Proctor, chose as the subject of his speech, addressed to the students in the Philosophical Schools, the proceedings of the Heads in the disgrace of their illustrious brother. This gentleman, who afterwards became Master of his College, was a zealous Whig, and had incurred some censure from the Vice-chancellor, for his behaviour on the occasion of the Degradation, when he demanded of him publicly upon what law or statute such a grace was founded. To bring a topic of this nature before young men was, to say the least, a blameable act of indiscretion. On the two tripos days, when the academical honours of the year are announced, in compliance with ancient custom some degree of licence among the youth was always tolerated, though frequent endeavours were made to contract its limits. At this time disturbances being apprehended, the Senate took the precaution of appointing eight special Proctors to preserve order on those days. This measure, perhaps designed only as a reflection on the Proctor, the regular functionary, whose conduct had given great offence, was a step of very questionable policy; being calculated to excite the evil which it was designed to repress. A habit of insubordination, when once begun, is not quickly subdued: I observe that it was deemed necessary to have recourse to the same precaution previous to the tripos days, in each of the ten succeeding years¹.

The exasperation of parties in the preceding age had generally produced some real or imaginary plot, the belief or disbelief of which became a kind of political test. It would appear that at this period the taste for sham plots was not quite extinct, and that the conflict of party feeling in the academical

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Pretended
plots
against Dr.
Gooch.

¹ University Register.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

world would not be satisfied without some admixture of this sort. The first symptom I shall give in the words of Conyers Middleton :

“ Ashenhurst, when he was caught the other day alone and without leave in the Vice-chancellor’s house, and in the absence of the family, set the whole University a thinking and talking of Young’s plot upon the late Bishop of Rochester.”—*Some Remarks on a Pamphlet*, &c. p. 7.

The other anecdote of a reputed plot has been preserved by tradition. It was reported about this time, that Dr. Gooch had been shot at through a window of his lodge, and the shot was surmised to have been fired from part of the premises of Trinity College : moreover it was asserted that the bullet had penetrated the wainscot. This story was probably not much believed even by those who reported it : but it continued to be preserved as a sort of legendary tale in Caius College ; the hole in the wainscot was still pointed out, although people were incredulous about the cause. However, a few years ago, some repairs being necessary, the wainscot was removed, and in the recorded spot, the bullet was actually found in the wall. Had this examination taken place at the moment, it would have been held to confirm the report, that some emissary of Bentley had attempted to assassinate the judge of whom he complained.

The Fellows
of Trinity
renew their
exertions to
procure a
hearing for
their Peti-
tion.

Meanwhile the Fellows of Trinity College, who had so long been labouring to procure the interposition of a Visitor, thought that now their Master had himself brought matters to the desired crisis ; and trusted that in the expected visitation of the University, the affairs of their Royal College could not fail to come under review. It will be recollected that their petition to the King, owing to Sir Edward Northey’s neglect of his commission, remained still

without effect. At this juncture Dr. Colbatch exerted himself afresh to procure attention to the grievances of the College: he renewed his solicitations to Archbishop Wake, Lord Sunderland the Premier, and Lord Parker, who was now made Lord Chancellor, and shortly afterwards became Earl of Macclesfield. From the Archbishop he received the fullest assurances of support whenever the petition should be brought before the Council, along with private advice for his proceedings. But his Grace had not much interest with the Cabinet Ministers, who were engaged in designs of no very friendly nature to the Establishment, and were resolved by every means in their power to discourage and break the High-church party. By his advice, however, a memorial was presented to Lord Sunderland, praying that the petition might be considered. With the Lord Chancellor Colbatch had several personal interviews, and at his desire laid before him a detailed statement of the College grievances, and heard from him with great delight that it was intended to advise the King to grant the full visitatorial power to the Bishop of Ely, and that a patent for this purpose would pass the Great Seal: at other times his Lordship intimated his opinion, that the Bishop was already authorized to execute those functions. His chaplain, Zachary Pearce, who had daily opportunities of conversing with the Chancellor, encouraged Dr. Colbatch with the same constantly repeated hopes of his taking some decisive step in this business. But Lord Parker was a politician, and an adept in the subtlest arts of political management. It appears to have been the feeling of the Ministry, that Bentley, being a professed and active partizan of the Whigs, must not be abandoned in the hour of his necessity: at the same time it was seen that if an absolute refusal

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Lord Chan-
cellor Par-
ker's pro-
mises.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

were given to those who only prayed for common justice, the odium of the Master's proceedings would be transferred from himself to the Government. The Lord Chancellor continued for at least three years to amuse Dr. Colbatch with expectations that the prayer of the petitioners was immediately to be complied with. It may appear surprising that a man of sense, who knew the world, should have suffered himself to be so long deceived ; but the candour and frankness of the language held by the great man, and the confidence reposed in his designs by Pearce, his chaplain, will account for the credulity of the Doctor and his confederates.

May 26.
The Petition
again read
in Council.

The effect however of Colbatch's perseverance was, that the petition of the Fellows of Trinity College, after having remained three years in the hands of Sir E. Northey, was called for and again read at the Council-board, where the Lords Justices, one of whom was the Archbishop of Canterbury, presided in the absence of the King ; and by them it was referred to the committee of the Privy Council, who had been directed to prepare a Royal Commission for visiting the University.

This was felt by Bentley as a serious blow : he had not expected the old petition to come again to light, and he well knew that it would not be possible to obtain any considerable number of signatures to a similar one⁷. To get this document withdrawn from the Privy Council, was now an object which called for all his ingenuity and boldness. It will be recollected that when it was first presented and read in

⁷ The Archbishop had in fact recommended to Colbatch the presentation of a new petition : but the inefficacy of the former, added to the resentment shown by the Master against all the subscribers, to one of whom he had refused testimonials for Orders, made the Fellows unwilling to put their names to another.

Council, in 1716, the Master had attempted to effect a compromise with Miller; but the serjeant at that time breathed nothing but war and vengeance, and refused to listen to any overtures. He did not, however, take a sure method of gratifying revenge. His book about the University had only brought upon himself the resentment of all parties, without doing the least harm to his adversary. The intervening time had been full of angry and hostile measures. The condemnation of his treatise by the academical authorities, and his dismissal from the Deputy High-stewardship, in which measure Bentley and his friends concurred with the Tories, have been already noticed. He was also summoned before the Vice-chancellor's court on account of the same publication, through the agency of Bentley, who continued to press Dr. Gooch to exert the powers of a judge for his expulsion, until Middleton's suit against himself absorbed his attention. In retaliation, the Serjeant procured an information by the Attorney General against the University of Cambridge, upon some point relating to Mr. Wort's will, an affair in which he had himself been employed as counsel for the University⁹.

In Trinity College the usage experienced by Miller was not more agreeable. Some arrears to the amount of 30*l.* or 40*l.* were demanded, which he, considering that the college owed him the whole proceeds of his fellowship for some years, refused to pay; whereupon Richard Walker, the officer, by the Master's direction, put him out of commons. The serjeant, who was a vindictive man, had recourse, as usual, to an action at law :

Servius iratus leges minitatur et urnam.

⁹ This fact I learn from the University Register.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

He prosecuted Walker for taking a pupil without having qualified according to an Act of Parliament. On this occasion, however, his temper blinded his legal judgment: Walker was acquitted, and his expenses to the amount of 50*l.* were paid out of the college stock¹⁰. In addition to this ground of vexation, Bentley had in his recent 'Review of the Proceedings,' treated Miller with unsparing severity, and made it his principal object to prove him the 'completest blockhead he ever met with'¹¹.

Bentley concludes a treaty with Serjeant Miller.

All these circumstances were discouraging to any hopes of accommodation. But Bentley, who knew that the serjeant was not indifferent to the pecuniary view of the question, and that he had small chance of recovering any part of his expenses except through an agreement with himself, made the attempt without delay, and found him willing enough to enter into a treaty. Through the intervention of one Edwards, an attorney in town, the terms of pacification were speedily arranged. Miller had received 105*l.*, voted by the Seniors, towards carrying on the prosecution before Bishop Moore; and had been for some time urging his fellow-prosecutors to defray the remainder of his charges. He now engaged, upon condition of receiving 400*l.* as costs in that cause, and half the dues of a Fellow since 1715, with the whole of his room-rent, that he would resign his fellowship, and moreover withdraw both his own petition and that presented by him, in 1716, on behalf of Colbatch and eighteen other Fellows, to the King in Council.

It is at first rejected by the Seniority.

The Master had a two-fold object; to remove the probability of a visitation, by getting the petition withdrawn, and to obtain the payment of his own

¹⁰ This anecdote was told by Walker himself in his evidence at Ely House, in 1733.

¹¹ *Review of the Proceedings, &c.* p. 39.

expenses incurred in the late prosecution ; which he considered a necessary corollary to the proposition for defraying those of Serjeant Miller. Losing no time in the execution of his project, he propounded the business to his Seniority, read to them the letters of Edwards, containing assurances of Miller's assent to the bargain ; and then proposed that he should have 400*l.* besides the consideration for his fellowship, paid from the College money ; and that he should himself be reimbursed his own expenses, which he estimated at the same sum as Miller's. The opposition to his measures in this body was generally such as he was able to overpower either by a majority of votes, or the force of his prerogative : Ayloffe the Orator, and Bouquet the Hebrew Professor, both men of honour and integrity, were disposed to resist the abuse of power, which was now become unhappily frequent ; but they had not the firmness or resolution of Colbatch, and were generally overborne and brow-beaten. On this occasion however the result was different. Dr. Colbatch firmly protested against such an extravagant and unreasonable appropriation of College money : with respect to the claims of Serjeant Miller, he urged, that if he produced the account of his expenses, they ought to be defrayed by those who had employed him to conduct the prosecution ; and declared himself ready to pay his own quota : to which the Master replied, " You call yourselves the College ; the College, therefore, is bound to pay ;" adding, upon the authority of Edwards, that the Lord Chancellor had been heard to express his approbation of such a mode of settling the business. Colbatch then proposed that the question of expending so large a sum of money for such purposes should be submitted to the Visitor. This suggestion touched the very string which was most displeasing to the

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Master; to remove all chance of an appeal to a Visitor being the principal object of the whole device. He immediately assailed Colbatch with invective, as a disturber of the peace of the society; and after one of those indecorous altercations which were now become frequent in their debates, he put to the vote his proposal for paying both the serjeant's expenses and his own: when, to his surprise and mortification, five of the eight Seniors answered in the negative. Bentley, though chagrined by this unexpected rebuff, was not accustomed to acquiesce in a defeat: he soon afterwards told Colbatch, that 'the money was none of his, and that he was resolved to have it, though by another way.'

Dr. Baker
procures
signatures
in favour of
Bentley's
scheme.

The instrument employed for his new measures was Dr. John Baker, whom we have already had occasion to mention as his obsequious agent. This gentleman, having been College tutor of the Westminster scholars, may be presumed to have possessed learning and ability; but I can meet with him in no character, except that of an active, devoted, and unscrupulous minister to all the Master's views and projects. In order to give a colour to the intended bargain, Baker solicited most of the Fellows for their approbation of a measure, which he represented would at once restore harmony to the distracted college, and confer a great obligation on the Master: they were to sign a paper to this effect: "I hereby declare that I sincerely wish that an end may be put to the contests which have so long disturbed the college; and in order thereto, I desire that the charges of each side may be defrayed out of the common stock of the college." The society had for some time felt severely the effects of these protracted feuds, not only in the destruction of domestic tranquillity, but in the diminution of its numbers, and

the general odium under which it lay. Baker therefore, beginning with the newly-elected Fellows immediately on their admission, and canvassing all the juniors, many of whom had been his pupils, was successful in persuading them to adopt a measure from which he promised such great results; and they listened to his assurances that no future conduct of the Master would break the intended pacification. Their names, with the addition of all who could be influenced by Dr. Bentley, amounted to thirty-three. Baker declared that his agency in this business was at his own motion, and took credit to himself as being *totius rei inceptor et perfector*: but it was only calculated to give a colour and pretext for the measure, upon which it could have no real influence. A more effectual step was the intimation that, unless this order were passed, the Master would not consent to sealing any leases; while Modd, Barwell, and Brabourn were alarmed with the idea of being obliged to pay their share of Miller's expenses, unless the whole were defrayed from the college funds. But it was found necessary to wait for Colbatch's absence. He being called by business to London at the latter end of November, Baker became his substitute in the Seniority; whereupon a meeting was called, and the measure of composition again proposed by the Master. Barwell, who had formerly opposed it, was now gained over either by threats or persuasion; and on the votes being taken, the bargain was ratified by the voices of the Master and five Fellows. By this decree Miller almost immediately received 528*l.* of the college money, for prosecutors' costs, his share of arrears, and, as I apprehend, of interest; Humphreys, who had been elected conditionally into the fellowship, had 58*l.* for his share of arrears; and the Master received 500*l.* for his own expenses on the

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

The bargain
is ratified
by the Se-
niors.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

trial. Availing himself of the granting propensity of his majority, he obtained 284*l.* more for certain elegant furniture which he had purchased for his house. In compliance with the stipulations, the serjeant withdrew both his own petition against Dr. Bentley, and that of the nineteen Fellows, which he had in 1716 presented on their behalf to the King in Council; giving at the same time a full discharge to the college and all its members for any further claims upon his fellowship.

Arguments
for and
against the
transaction.

As this is by far the greatest malversation ever charged against Bentley in his disposal of the college funds, I have been careful to examine and compare the evidence deposed by each party, when it became a subject of judicial inquiry; and I am compelled to state that the pretences by which this misappropriation of public money was justified, are totally futile. He alleged that it was done at the request of the Fellows, for the purpose of restoring harmony to the society: he had taken the opinions of two eminent barristers, Reeve and Lutwyche, upon the equity of defraying from the public stock the expenses of a cause, in which the society had been almost equally divided, and their answer was favourable: Dr. Baker avowed himself the originator of the scheme, and assumed the whole merit or demerit of the management; urging besides, that the withdrawing the Petition was not the object, but only a consequence of the agreement. Not one of these allegations will bear examination. The agency of Baker in procuring the Fellows' signatures was not thought of, till after the whole bargain had been negotiated between the attorney and Miller; nor before the Master had himself earnestly but unsuccessfully endeavoured to obtain the consent of the Seniors: the reference to lawyers was designed only

as a blind ; since this was a question of which professional men were no better judges than any other persons of sense and probity ; and the case submitted to them, presumed that the contending parties in College at this time joined in the desire to settle their dispute by such an expedient : a supposition which was the reverse of the fact. The only ground upon which the measure could be justified, was, the restoring peace to the distracted college, and terminating those feuds which destroyed every object of its foundation : such a purpose would have been cheaply purchased by this or even a larger pecuniary sacrifice. But the bargain now ratified with Miller had not a tendency to produce that effect : it was rather calculated to exasperate the party who were aggrieved by their petition being withdrawn, and saw so large a portion of their common property employed in procuring the triumph of their adversary. The grant to Miller can only be regarded as pay for that which he alone could accomplish, taking away from the Council the consideration of giving a Visitor to the College. But for this object, Bentley would never have agreed to grant money to a hated adversary, from whose hostility he had nothing further to dread ; he would have taken some other method to obtain the 500*l.* for himself ; or would have abandoned all thoughts of it, rather than set an example of paying from the college funds the expenses of prosecuting the Master.

Serjeant Miller experienced the just lot of treachery ; he was despised by the party whom he served, and execrated by those whom he betrayed ; no tongue and no pen ever attempted to urge the least apology for him. As he considered himself ill used by the desertion of his former confederates, he would not have been censured for making an agreement with

Subsequent
history of
Miller.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Bentley, as far as he was himself concerned. But the essence of his present bargain was, that he should sell the interests of a third party, the petitioners of 1716, against whom he had no complaint, and who had confided themselves to his honour. Of the subsequent history of this personage, I know little: he lived about twelve years after this time; but he left the Cambridge circuit, and never, that we hear, showed himself again in the University. He so far continued his adherence to Bentley's interests, that he refused all applications to give up the original affidavits sworn against him at his trial. Miller was afterwards a member of the House of Commons, where we find him maintaining the extreme opinions of the Whig party: in 1725 he spoke against the bill for enabling Lord Bolingbroke to succeed to his family inheritance, after he had received the King's pardon, although this partial reversal of the attainder was recommended and supported by Walpole himself¹²; and not long afterwards he was made one of the Barons of the Exchequer for Scotland.

Bishop
Fleetwood
again re-
fuses to in-
terfere.

While this bargain was pending, Ayloff and Colbatch laid a full statement of the case before the Bishop of Ely, and once more conjured him to interpose and prevent such an injury to the society. But the reply of that prelate was a repetition of his former resolution, not to act as Visitor while the petition to the King in Council lay still unanswered. When the compact was completed, and the petition withdrawn, the only ground of the Fellows was cut from under them, and they were left in absolute despair of ever having a Visitor. Archbishop Wake, their only friend among the great, was hereby ren-

¹² *Chandler's Parliamentary Debates.* Serjeant Miller was member for Petersham at the general elections of 1722 and 1727.

dered unable to assist them, and it was understood that their Master was countenanced and screened by Earl Stanhope, who had succeeded to the seals of Secretary of State for the Home Department¹⁸.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Previous to this consummation, several exertions, or rather abuses, of the Master's power had taken place, with the intent of strengthening his influence over the Seniority. At the re-election of Mr. Modd to the Vice-mastership, when Dr. Colbatch objected that he had not put any one statute in execution, that he had not kept the other officers to their duties, and specified that Dr. Ashenhurst had been suffered totally to neglect the lectureships which he held the last two years, the Master replied 'that objection concerned only the time past; what had he to object for the time to come?' a repartee uttered in the very wantonness of power; while at the same time he wrote down Ashenhurst for a third lecture for the ensuing year. He nominated Mr. Brabourn, a person nearly insane, to the Perpetual Curacy of St. Michael's, in Cambridge, though not one of the Seniors, except Brabourn himself, would vote for committing the care of a parish to hands so obviously unfit and incapable. Shortly after, he chose the same person pandoxator, a College officer through whose hands considerable sums of money annually pass. Hacket was made Vicar of Trumpington; which preferment had been augmented by a bequest of the celebrated Herbert Thorndike, who had annexed to the enjoyment of this augmentation the condition of residence: he was accordingly bound to reside in his vicarage by a bond of 1000*l.* given to Thorndike's trustees: one of these trustees was the

Abuses of
the Master's
authority.

¹⁸ This fact was positively asserted by Mr. Justice Page, during his stay in Trinity College, at the Lent Assizes in 1720. He was a friend of Miller, and had other opportunities of learning the fact.—*Colbatch's Journal*.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Master; who soon made the performance of the condition impossible, by choosing Hacket senior-dean of the College. The statutes enjoin that the Fellows shall perform theological disputations in the chapel on Fridays; at which exercises the dean presides as moderator: Hacket being destitute of that as well as every other description of learning, the exercises from his time fell into disuse. He seems to have been originally chosen Fellow upon no ground whatever except his relationship to Bishop Hacket, the great benefactor of the College. This act, which took place before Bentley's time, though dictated by gratitude, is an instance of the lasting mischief which results from suffering any consideration, except that of merit, to operate in admitting members into a society.

Oct. 1.
Appeal to
the Visitor
by Charles
Squire.

At the election of Fellows in 1719, Charles Squire, whom some of the examiners considered the best qualified of the candidates, was rejected by the Master, though five of the Seniors voted for him. As this young man, besides his literary claims, had a blameless and exemplary character, his rejection was attributed to his being a pupil of Professor Pilgrim, whose attachment to Colbatch's party had brought upon him the resentment of the Master. He was advised, therefore, to appeal against the election to the Bishop of Ely as Visitor: this design was encouraged by Dr. Colbatch; who well knew that the Bishop would decline acting as Visitor; but his object was to solicit attention by every means to the proceedings of the Master; thinking that publicity was now the only check upon his arbitrary conduct. We have already mentioned the statute by which Bentley justified his electing by his sole voice, unless the eight Seniors were unanimous against him: but it is to be observed that Colbatch always disputed his

interpretation, and contended that the words *in plures partes divisi*, implied a division of the Seniors into more than two parts. This ground does not seem very tenable: but the Master was certainly in the habit of breaking the provisions of the statute, which require that, before his single nomination can take effect, the question must be three times put to the vote: a ceremony which he chose to omit as unnecessary.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

The war excited in these once peaceful seats of learning continued to rage with unabated fury in several quarters at once: the reader, in perusing the proceedings which follow, will observe that they took place at nearly the same period, and that the feelings produced by each had great influence in blowing the flames of discord to a still greater height.

Middleton having successfully fleshed his maiden sword in the contest, and having by his three pamphlets raised much odium against his enemy, resolved to pursue the war, which he considered must be one of extermination. It was thought that a public exposure of Bentley's conduct in governing his college was now the best, or rather the only expedient for obtaining the interference of some superior authority. Colbatch, who was both able and willing to effect this, knew that whatever he might publish against the Master would be interpreted as a statutable crime, calling for expulsion. Middleton therefore, who owed Bentley no allegiance, and was disposed to give him no more quarter than he would have vouchsafed to a wolf or a tiger, undertook the task. He first borrowed some papers of Colbatch, who was in the habit of recording all events as they occurred, and afterwards detailing them in the shape of memorials to the Bishop of Ely, the Lord Chancellor, and other great men; and with this assistance he executed as keen a piece

Middleton
writes a
pamphlet
against
Bentley's
College go-
vernment.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

of invective as that period, however fruitful in such productions, can show. He termed it, 'A True Account of the Present State of Trinity College in Cambridge, under the oppressive Government of their Master, Richard Bentley, late D.D.:' and gave as his motto a sentence from one of Cicero's speeches against Verres; pieces which he seems to have taken as the model for his invective against Bentley: *Prætermittam minora omnia, quorum simile forsitan alius quoque aliquid aliquando fecerit: nihil dicam nisi singulare; nisi quod, si in alium reum diceretur, incredibile videretur.* Middleton first states that since the Court had apparently left Bentley to his fate, and given up the intended Royal Visitation, the members of Trinity, who had relied on that event for some redress, were left abandoned and hopeless to his tyranny and oppression, and were unable to obtain justice, or even a hearing of their grievances: he then enters into a detail of his different abuses of power, laying principal stress upon the occurrences of the last two or three years. Almost all these have already been laid before our readers, divested of the additions with which the malice and inveteracy of his enemies had clothed them. In Middleton's pamphlet every thing is represented in the strongest colouring: the Master's actions are charged with being not only unstatutable and illegal, but mean, dishonest, rapacious, oppressive, and inhuman; while his motives are impeached as still worse than his actions. Middleton, in order to gain credit with his readers, challenged his enemy to refute the charge, in terms sufficiently uncompromising.

"The charge I have brought against the Master, is such, that no honest man can falsely make, any more than an honest man can be guilty of it,—*ita apertam vim habet, ut aut accusetur improbe aut defendatur.* The controversy is of that nature, as can never end but

in the loss of all credit and character to one side or other; the quarrel is now come to such a head and crisis, that it is impossible for the contending parties to live with any ease together within the same walls; it is impossible for them to continue scuffling and wrangling thus perpetually, but to the irreparable damage and utter ruin of the Society. It is now become necessary that one or other be made to submit and quit the field to his adversary; this is the issue that the complainants would gladly put the dispute upon. If their accusation should appear at last to be false and frivolous, they are content to become as justly odious, as their Master must needs be, if it is found real and unanswerable; they are content to suffer expulsion themselves, if they cannot prove him to have long deserved it."—*True Account*, &c. p. 38.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

There was no question that every page of this book contained libellous matter; but it was doubted whether Bentley would venture to resent it, either by an action or the press: if he did, it was thought that the writer's object would be gained, in forcing the affairs of Trinity College into public notice. But this reasoning was erroneous. No sooner had he perused the book than he determined on his measures, and put them as promptly into execution. He called the Seniors together, read to them some passages from the publication, and then produced a ready-written censure, denouncing it as a scandalous libel upon the college and its members, and declaring that the printer, publisher, author, or authors should be prosecuted at the public expense. This was five days before the accomplishment of the bargain with Serjeant Miller: Colbatch, as we have observed, was absent at that time; three of the Seniors, Jordan, Ayloffe, and Bouquet opposed the censure; but the Master with the other five decreed it in the terms given in the note¹⁴. Having carried this point, he

It is censured by the Seniority.

Nov. 30.

¹⁴ "Nov. 30, 1719. Whereas a pamphlet was brought before us with this title: *A True Account of the Present State of Trinity College, in Cambridge, under the oppressive Government of their Master*, RICHARD BENT-

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Bentley's
attempt
against
Colbatch.

advanced a step further, thinking to crush all his enemies at a blow. The intimate knowledge of college transactions exhibited in this pamphlet, made him conclude that it must have been written, or at least the materials supplied, by one of the Seniority ; and he had no hesitation in fixing upon Dr. Colbatch as that individual. Accordingly, assuming him to be either the author or instigator of the work, he proposed that, as a punishment, he should at once be removed from the Seniority : and two of his adherents, Brabourn and Baker, entered unscrupulously into this measure. But here his support ended : Modd and Barwell, though they had, for the sake of avoiding broils, given an almost indiscriminate consent to the Master's projects, had yet virtue enough to refuse being made instruments in the ruin of a brother, whose crime was his perseverance in a resistance which they had themselves abandoned as hopeless. Bentley therefore, unable to inflict this summary blow on his enemy, satisfied himself with a Power of Attorney under the College seal, enabling his own solicitor, Edwards, to bring whatever actions he

LEY, late D.D. *Printed for T. Bickerton, at the Crown in Paternoster Row, 1720.* Upon examining the said pamphlet, resolved by the Master and majority of Seniors, with the general approbation of the other Fellows, and the Scholars, that it is a false, and malicious, and scandalous libel, traducing this Royal foundation for a decay of all good learning in it, for want of all discipline, for wronging and defrauding the College tenants in their rents, and many other wicked calumnies, tending to the detriment and dishonour of this flourishing Society ; and that the printer, publisher, author or authors of the said libel (if discovered) be forthwith prosecuted at law, and an instrument under the College seal be made for that purpose."

R. BENTLEY, Master of the College.
GEO. MODD.
MATT. BARWELL.
JA. BRABOURN.
JOHN HACKET.
JOHN BAKER.

pleased against the authors, printers, and publishers of the attack upon his government.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Dr. Middleton at first considered all this as the fulmination of empty menace : but a short time convinced him of the contrary, when he found a prosecution commenced against Bickerton, the publisher. Hereupon he resolved, with proper spirit, to avow the authorship ; but wishing to give at the same moment another wound to his adversary, he subjoined to this confession a copy of the articles of accusation, prepared by Colbatch to be laid before a Visitor, which had formed the ground-work of his pamphlet. The booksellers, however, were alarmed, and declined publishing what they thought would be considered as a fresh libel upon the Master of Trinity. He was therefore obliged to be satisfied with acknowledging himself the author, in an advertisement ; asserting, that the facts stated in his publication were only such as had been, or might be proved before a Visitor ; that the only motive of the book was to bring on a Visitation ; promising, that if the Master, or any friend of his, would answer it in print, he would either defend and prove every article, or give him the satisfaction of a public recantation ¹⁵.

Prosecutes
the pub-
lisher.

Middleton
confesses
the author-
ship.

¹⁵ This document, being curious, must be given at length.

Cambridge, Feb. 9, 1720.

“ Whereas the Master of Trinity College is prosecuting the author and publisher of a book, entitled *A True Account of the present State of Trinity College in Cambridge, under the oppressive Government of their Master, RICHARD BENTLEY, late D.D.* for the preventing all unnecessary trouble and expense in such prosecution, I hereby voluntarily acknowledge myself to be the sole author of the said book ; and do declare, that the several facts therein mentioned are no other than what have either been proved upon the Master, at a public trial before the late Bishop of Ely (who died before sentence was given), or will certainly, with many more of the same kind, be charged and proved upon him by the Fellows, whenever there shall be a Visitor assigned for that purpose ; for which they have long been petitioning : and I solemnly protest that I had no other design in

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Is prose-
cuted.

Bentley did not think fit to accept this challenge, but continued his prosecution of the bookseller, till Middleton consented to subscribe, before witnesses, an acknowledgment that he was the author : whereupon an information was commenced against him in the Court of King's Bench, on the joint behalf of the King and of Richard Bentley. To this species of action he had exposed himself by a sentence or two, which complained that the Fellows of Trinity had been unable to obtain justice, or even a hearing, from the King in Council, or any Court of Justice in the kingdom :

“ They have for several years past been labouring, by all the means they could, to procure a public and decisive hearing of their disputes, and have applied themselves for that purpose to every great man they could any way find access to : they have long been desirous to subject themselves to the visitatorial power of the Bishop of Ely, and to join in any addresses to Court or Parliament for such an explication of their statutes, as would confirm that power to him ; their Petition to the King in Council to assign them a Visitor, has been depending there above four years, without any other effect, than from the little notice that is taken of them abroad, to find themselves trampled upon, with the greater spirit and insolence, at home.

“ While the liberty of an Englishman is so much the envy of other nations, and the boast of our own, and the meanest peasant knows

writing the said book but to promote and bring on such a Visitation, by shewing the necessity of it, and to do justice to my worthy oppressed friends of that College (whereof I was not long since a Fellow), which they are not able to do of themselves, but at the hazard of their Fellowships ; (the Master having, since the publication of the book, attempted to deprive a reverend and learned member of the Seniority for the bare suspicion of his being the author of it.) And I do now affirm, that I have said nothing material in the said book but under the utmost conviction of its truth, either from my own knowledge, or upon the best evidence and information, as will easily appear whenever there shall be occasion : and if, in the meanwhile, the Master or any of his friends, will undertake to answer it in print, I hereby promise either to defend and prove every article alleged against him, or to make him the satisfaction of a public recantation.

“ CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.”

where to find redress for the least grievance he has to complain of; it is hardly credible, that a body of learned and worthy men, oppressed and injured daily, in every thing that is dear and valuable to them, should not be able to find any proper court of justice in the kingdom that will receive their complaints." *True Account*, &c. p. 5.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

These words were construed into a reflection upon the King's government and the administration of the law. To arrest this prosecution it was in vain that Middleton produced affidavits of his good and peaceable character, and the general correctness of his details of the College affairs. The proceedings however, though sure, were slow; harassing postponements took place from term to term; and before the case was brought to its crisis, many other incidents occurred of considerable moment to our narrative.

The senior Fellow of Trinity, Dr. Stubbe¹⁶, who when superseded in the vice-mastership, had withdrawn into voluntary exile from the college, died about the end of October 1719, vacating the rectory of Orwell in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. This living, being separated from the Vicarage, was a

¹⁶ Though we have had occasion to remark the high monarchical principles of Dr. Stubbe, yet I apprehend him to have been the last surviving member of Trinity College, who was educated under the Republican regime. His remains were brought for interment to his rectory of Orwell; where a monument was erected by Mr. Paris, to whom he left much of his property, with the following inscription:

Hic juxta sitæ sunt
Corporales Reliquiæ
Dignissimi WOLFRANI STUBBE, S. T. P.
Hujus Ecclesiæ non ita pridem Rectoris.
Hic apud Cantabrigienses et Sacræ Linguae Professor,
Et Collegii Trinitatis Vice-Magister fuit:
Hic ad extremum usque ætatis
In conservando Collegio
Strenue elaboravit,
Vires ultra sortemque senectæ.
* * * * *
Annos natus 82.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Colbatch
claims the
vacant rec-
tory of Or-
well.

desirable preferment for a Senior-fellow, and had successively been held, ever since the foundation, by the oldest doctor in the college. Colbatch being now the senior graduate, immediately claimed it as his right. No opposition was offered by any one of his brethren¹⁷; but when the Master was requested to hold a meeting to give the presentation, which, by order of the statutes, is to be within a month after the vacancy has been announced, he flatly refused; alleging on this, as on similar occasions, that he was at liberty to postpone the presentation till the conclusion of six months, which opinion he maintained by an ingenious but sophistical argument, drawn from a comparison of provisions in other parts of the statutes. It may be remarked that his plan of keeping livings undecided till the last moment, was one of the methods by which he retained his Fellows in dependence. Colbatch thinking this a favourable occasion for fighting the battle, prepared himself, with the aid of his friend Dr. Exton Sayer of the Commons, to demand from the law that justice, which the Master was disposed to refuse him. He applied to the diocesan, Bishop Fleetwood, with the proofs of his claim, begging him to interfere as Ordinary, if he declined to do so as Visitor, and to require that the statutable presentation should be made. But that prelate was inflexible in his resolution to take no step which might bring himself into trouble. However he made no secret of his opinion upon the matter, but declared that Colbatch's right to the living was 'indefeasible:' and when a friend of the Master's hinted that the Doctor was unfriendly to the Government, the Bishop promptly replied that 'that was no reason why justice

¹⁷ There were three clerical fellows senior to Colbatch at this time; but they were only Masters of Arts, and no controversy was now raised against the right of the senior graduates to the preopon of livings.

should be refused him.' Bentley now gave out that he thought of presenting himself to this sinecure, and appropriating the profits to a fund for the improvement of College preferment. Such a scheme was in plain opposition to the statutes, and probably was never seriously entertained, but designed as a veil of his real object, which was to make Colbatch surrender his fellowship on receiving this preferment. He reckoned that when he had once freed himself from that adversary, he should be left in undisturbed possession of his monarchy. The scheme appeared at first sight likely to succeed: the rectory was peculiarly desirable to a Professor of the University; and Colbatch, in giving up his fellowship, would make but a trifling pecuniary sacrifice, as he might in that case retain his prebend at Salisbury: on the other hand, his continuance in the College held out little other prospect than that of interminable broils, injurious to the peace of mind, the feelings, and the studies of a scholar. But Bentley did not properly estimate the person by whom he was opposed. Colbatch acted upon principle; and would rather have sacrificed his life than abandoned a cause, which mainly relied on his support.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

When, after five months' importunity, the subject was agitated at the board of Seniority, the Master offered the living of Orwell to Dr. Colbatch upon condition of resigning his fellowship. The other firmly declined accepting upon conditions that which was his right by statute; contending that he asked no favour, but only justice: whereupon the Master as positively refused to consent to his having the presentation; alleging that he had two *causæ gravissimæ* against him—disaffection to the Government, and disaffection to the College. Of the first charge his proof was a hearsay report, that 'a certain gentle-

The struggle between him and the Master.

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

'man,' whom he would not name, suspected of being a Jacobite, had praised Dr. Colbatch as 'a very worthy man.' On the second head, he urged, on the authority of 'a certain bishop,' that he had confessed having supplied the materials for Middleton's pamphlet. For this last allegation there was some ground : Colbatch had certainly told Dr. Trimnell, the Bishop of Norwich, that Middleton had seen some papers of his ; a piece of information of which the good bishop made an indiscreet use. The only individuals who abetted the Master on this occasion were Brabourn and Hacket, two discreditable auxiliaries, who brought upon themselves a severe rebuke and exposure by Dr. Colbatch, from which no one interposed to protect them. . It appears extraordinary that Bentley should have so far lost his sagacity and presence of mind, as to defer such objections until after he had, before witnesses, offered him the living upon condition of quitting his fellowship ; whereby he supplied evidence of the futility of his own pretences. Colbatch, who was neither a vain nor arrogant man, says, that, on this occasion, 'he fairly threw Bentley on his back : ' and this is the first time I find it hinted that he was not the same man as formerly.

In a few days the Master altered his measures, and made overtures through Modd and Aylofffe, for an accommodation : offering to give his consent to Colbatch having the living, provided he would engage no longer to solicit a visitation of the college : he likewise proposed an amicable conference, to which the other unwillingly consented. The interview between these enemies took place in the presence of Modd, Aylofffe, and Hacket : but it resembled the meeting of Brutus and Cassius with the Triumvirs. Colbatch refused to make any promise or condition, and declared that he would only accept the living *pure et*

simpliciter, as the oath of institution requires. To the wishes expressed by Bentley 'for the peace of the college,' he replied that this was the main object of his own desires; and that being persuaded it could only be secured by having a perpetual Visitor, he would not cease to labour for the appointment of one. Finally they parted in mutual defiance, the Master declaring that he would withhold his consent, though the living should thereby lapse to the Bishop. The prospect of the last alternative, which was near approaching, proved very disagreeable to the Master's own partizans, who considered this as a wanton loss of the college preferment, and pressed him that if Colbatch was not to have it, the presentation might be given to some other Fellow. Meanwhile some friends of Colbatch came up and remained in College, in order to be present at the meeting of the sixteen, which was necessary for affixing the seal: so that the result of the struggle was doubtful. But Bentley was defeated from an occurrence to which all courts are liable, a dissention among his own adherents. Hacket, whose support of his measures was mercenary, aimed at this rectory for himself: Baker, who disliked and despised Hacket, thought that if the statutable claim of seniority was to be set aside, his own services merited this reward; and Ashenhurst, a powerful auxiliary, espoused his cause. The two aspirants were irreconcilable, each preferring that Orwell should be given to Colbatch, rather than to his competitor. Thus circumstanced, the Master had no choice but either to yield the point to his adversary, or hazard the breaking up of his own party. Accordingly he gave a reluctant acquiescence; but could not so far overcome his mortification, as to be present at the meeting which gave the presentation to Dr. Colbatch. The honest joy expressed by all the Fel-

CHAP.
XIV.
1719.

Bentley
obliged to
give way.

April 11,
1720.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

lows at this termination of the contest, is one of the few gratifying circumstances in this disastrous period of the College history : not only the rest of Bentley's partizans joined in testifying their satisfaction, but even Brabourn and Hacket made atonement for their former hostility.

Humphreys
admitted
Fellow.

In the meantime other events had occurred, which though the biographer of Dr. Bentley can have no satisfaction in relating, it is yet necessary to mention, as being the steps by which he compassed his objects. It will be remembered that in 1714 David Humphreys had been chosen to fill Miller's fellowship, in case the King should before the expiration of nine months declare it to be void. An article in the late bargain with the Serjeant was, that the arrears should be divided between him and Humphreys, and that the fellowship should thenceforward be enjoyed by the latter, who was to have seniority according to his standing. Humphreys was deserving of the fellowship, and after a suspense of above five years, his admission seemed reasonable and equitable : but it was pointedly against the statutes to admit any one above the standing of Master of Arts ; and the King never having declared Miller's fellowship vacant, all the consequences built upon that supposition were an evident nullity. When the treaty was completed, a meeting was called to admit Humphreys. The party in the Seniority opposed to the Master, being four in number, might, had they held firmly together, have obstructed most of his projects ; but he generally carried his points in the absence of one of them. On this occasion Dr. Bouquet, thinking it useless to irritate the Head of the College by further opposition after the main point had been decided, chose to be absent : Bentley also, finding that there were five Fellows on whom he could rely, and not wishing to

Jan. 2,
1720.

have a gratuitous altercation with Colbatch, thought proper to stay away. After an indignant protest against any business being transacted by a meeting which did not consist of the eight seniors in College, and likewise against the unstatutable act of admitting a Fellow of Humphrey's standing, Colbatch and his two friends left the Chapel. To withdraw after a protest, instead of witnessing acts which they deemed illegal, was for several years the general practice of the malcontents; but the majority in this as well as every other instance completed the business, regardless of the secession of their brethren.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

We have had occasion to notice the privilege of holding preferment allowed by statute to the College-preachers, but denied to the rest of the Fellows; as well as the patronage exercised by Bentley in the appointments to these preacher-ships. The statutes of Trinity enjoin that there shall be read in Chapel every Sunday and Holiday a lecture upon some part of the catechism: in order that this exercise, at which all the scholars are to be present, may never be omitted, there are to be five or six Fellows appointed for the office; and at the vacancy of a preacher-ship, one of those who have completed their course is to be elected. The undoubted intent of this provision was to supply to the students constant instruction in the principles of Christianity, and at the same time to give a direction to the studies of the junior Fellows, by calling upon them for an appropriate and useful exercise in divinity. That the institution had been eminently useful was proved by Dr. Barrow's published exposition of the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, and the Sacraments, which had formed part of his catechetical lectures in Trinity Chapel; and by Herbert Thorndike's treatise on Church-government, which was grounded upon his

Lectures on
the cate-
chism, &c.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

Treatment
of Malled
and Crais-
ter.

lectures on the 'Power of the keys,' delivered in this course. During Dr. Bentley's mastership these lectures had been intermitted for months and years together. The fact is that he viewed them only as the means of approach to a College-preachership; and being resolved to appoint no one but those on whose attachment he could rely, he would not even suffer their names to be entered as Catechists; and resisted all applications to keep up the statutable number, by appointing the Fellows in their order to read those lectures. He urged in his defence they had not been kept up according to statute in the time of the last Master: but the omission then arose from the neglect of the Fellows themselves, not from any design of obstructing the access to a preachership. The Master when strongly importuned at a College-meeting to consent to the nomination of Catechists, treated the application with scorn, saying, 'that it was nonsense to talk of putting up five or six persons to catechize at once.' Afterwards two of the persons proposed, Malled and Craister, waited upon him either to beg or demand his permission for that purpose: both these gentlemen having been subscribers to the Petition of 1716 for fixing a Visitor, had no great pretensions to his patronage. He very unceremoniously turned them from the door, and told the Seniority that 'he supposed they had sent them to bravo him.' However the Seniors did take upon themselves, in the Master's absence, to appoint Malled to catechize: the vicarage of Barrington was then vacant, and he wished for a preachership in order to hold it. Having performed the exercises, he again waited on the Master to solicit the appointment; but was plainly told that 'he was on a side,' and that 'he must change sides before he could be judged fit to be a College-preacher.' Malled did

not choose to adopt this condition : he applied no more for that object, but took the first opportunity of quitting his fellowship for a living in the North. On the rejection of his senior, Craister called to beg that he might be suffered to qualify himself for this living ; but was treated with still less ceremony than the other. The Master, after reminding him that he had voted for his Degradation, took him by the shoulder and fairly pushed him out of the door. As for the living, he designed it for his useful favourite, Richard Walker, who was considerably junior to those named ; but finding that he could not gain consent to this mode of rewarding his services, he offered to present Craister provided he would quit his fellowship. Failing in this also, he suffered the presentation to lapse and be lost to the College. Dr. Colbatch, who entertained a peculiarly strong feeling of the propriety of keeping up these lectures, suffered greater uneasiness from this than from any other part of the Master's conduct : at a time when his own interests in the affair of Orwell were at stake, he remonstrated on this subject in a Seniority, and earnestly begged that the statute might be executed for the future : he then proposed the names of five persons for Catechists ; whereupon the Master exclaimed, " you propose ? and pray who are you, that you propose ? " to which the other replied, that ' it was not himself, but the statutes which made the proposition.'

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

February,
1720.

But while Bentley repulsed with such a high hand all who were disposed to mutiny against his authority, he was careful to throw open the doors of preferment to his supporters. About this time he made Uvedale, Parran, Whitfield, and Barnwell, College-preachers, though all of them junior to Malled who was refused. On the appointment of Dr. Whitfield a scene took

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

Bouquet.

place, which spoke in the clearest terms what must be expected by those who attempted to curb the autocrat of the society. He and Dr. Bouquet had been appointed to preach probation sermons by the Seniors, during the absence of the Master in London; a presumption for which the old gentlemen were severely reprimanded. Bentley, hastening his return, held a meeting for the election; when Bouquet, claiming a preachiership as his right by long standing, was treated with threats and scurrility. He had opposed the Master in the Seniority on the bargain with Serjeant Miller, on the prosecution of Middleton's book, and on other favourite questions. Bentley declared that 'he disapproved of his discourse, as he approved of Dr. Whitfield's, by report' (for he had heard neither), told him that 'his sermon was out of the dripping-pan,' and hinted that his being a foreigner and not naturalized was a ground for ejecting him from his fellowship, if not from his professorship. He was accordingly put aside, and his competitor elected. Bouquet being a Doctor of Divinity of nine years standing, Regius Professor of the Sacred Language, and a person of unblemished character, it was preposterous to urge such objections to his becoming either preacher or incumbent: but in effect, although he remained Fellow of the College above half a century, he was excluded throughout life upon no other pretence.

Whitfield.

Dr. Whitfield deserves a particular notice among the Master's adherents, as being attached to him, not like many others upon grounds of party or interest, but by personal regard and friendship, which I observe from some letters of his that have fallen into my hands, he retained long after he had left the society. He was a man of extensive reading and considerable ability; his theological opinions were

suspected, but erroneously, I believe, of Arianism. About four years after this time he married, on the living of Dickleborough in Norfolk, quitting his fellowship before he had sullied his character by any unworthy compliances with the humour or schemes of his principal.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

It may be remembered that Dr. Gooch had been re-elected Vice-chancellor in 1718, that he might in the character of chief-magistrate defend before the King in Council the proceedings of himself and the University, relative to the Suspension and Degradation of the Master of Trinity College. The Committee of the Privy Council appointed to prepare a Royal visitation, which was to settle all disputes in the University, did nothing : and the only advice which his Ministers gave to the King was, not to interfere in any way with these academical feuds. Matters therefore at the conclusion of Gooch's second year of office, were in the same state as at its commencement. Bentley was deprived of every degree, and all voice or interference in University business. He held, however, the station of Regius Professor of Divinity, although excluded from the performance of its duties. For some time after his Degradation the disputations in theology were entirely omitted and dispensed with, on the payment of *caution*. Upon the receipt of a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, objecting to this practice, and informing the University that he would not admit theological degrees obtained without exercises, to be a ground of dispensation for holding two livings, some disputations did take place in the Schools. But as I find no person named who presided at them as moderator, and as they are termed miserable and unfruitful, I apprehend that they were in fact little

The design
of a Royal
Visitation
of the Uni-
versity
abandoned.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

Dr. Gooch
elected a
third time
Vice-chancellor.

Nov. 4.
1719.

better than mere forms, intended to satisfy the letter of the law. Since this state of things was discreditable to the University, and there was now no prospect of Bentley's being restored to his degrees on the terms of submission, it was resolved to make an effort to deprive him of his professorship. Dr. Gooch had at the time of the Suspension, threatened that 'if he did not make his submission in three days, he would declare his professorship vacant.' He was probably not aware, when he uttered this menace, that it could only be executed by the joint agency of the Vice-chancellor and the Master of Trinity; and the latter, being identified with the Professor, was not likely to concur in his own deprivation. A resolution being now taken of having recourse to the law for assistance, it was found necessary to elect the Vice-chancellor to a third year of office; the junta, who ruled the University, not daring at that moment to entrust the chief magistracy to any one whose views did not exactly coincide with their own. There was another ostensible ground for continuing Gooch in office; the first steps had been taken in the preceding year towards building a new Senate-house: this, however, appears to have been only intended as a colourable pretence. There having been no instance of the same individual holding the Vice-chancellorship three years together, since the reign of Elizabeth, the Heads did not think it safe to leave any option to the Senate; they therefore nominated along with Gooch the Bishop of Carlisle, upon whom they knew that the office could not be imposed. Bentley's party however chose to express their feelings on this occasion by a poll, in which 58 voted for Bishop Bradford, and 94 for Dr. Gooch.

After long delays the attack upon the Professor assumed the form of a Rule of the Court of King's Bench, calling upon the electors to the professorship, to shew cause why a mandamus should not be issued, obliging them to fill up a supposed vacancy in the Chair. This was obtained in Trinity Term 1720, by the Attorney General, Sir R. Raymond, counsel for the University, upon the affidavit of Robert Simpson, one of the Esquire-beadles; who detailed the circumstances of Dr. Bentley's election, and deposed that the two Fellows of Trinity College, Modd and Bathurst, who had voted for him, were neither the *maxime seniores*, nor deputed by them, and that the whole affair was the result of collusion between the Master of Trinity and the other three electors; and therefore inferred that the place had never been legally filled since the death of Dr. James. This attempt was so weak, that it seems surprising how any success could have been expected from it. The collusion between the electors, to which he deposed, could only be matter of suspicion: in the absence of the two *maxime seniores*, the appearance of the next seniors in their room was consistent both with statute and practice: and whatever objections might be made to the proceedings, had been equally valid three years before; and were evidently brought forward at this time to serve a particular purpose. Bentley in reply to this deposition drew up three separate affidavits, from himself, Dr. Davies, and Mr. Modd¹⁸. The two latter negative the imputation of collusion, and make a judicious use of the fact of there being no competitor for the office, as justifying their choice of Bentley. His own affidavit is an able and artful composition; containing a

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

Application
to the Court
of King's
Bench to
deprive
Bentley of
his profes-
sorship.

¹⁸ Mr. Bathurst had died in February, 1719.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

November.

Election for
M.P. of the
University.

plausible account of the election itself, as well as of many subsequent occurrences; and dwelling particularly on the conduct of Dr. Gooch. Other affidavits were also filed in the Michaelmas term, in opposition to the Rule of Court, from some Fellows of Trinity, proving that the deputation of the electors which had taken place was consistent with forms and custom; and one from Lisle, deposing the treatment which the Professor had experienced from the Vice-chancellor. Whatever arguments took place in Court on this occasion have not been preserved: but it appears that the Rule was discharged¹⁹.

In the year 1720 political opinions were again brought into conflict in the University of Cambridge. The health of Dr. Paske, one of the representatives, having been for some time in a dangerous state, an active canvass was kept up, at least eighteen months, for the expected vacancy. Several candidates exerted their interest; but Dr. Paske dying in the latter end of the year, the contest lay between two—the Hon. Thomas Willoughby, second son of Lord Middleton, one of the twelve Tory peers created on the same day by Queen Anne, and the Hon. Henry Finch, son of Daniel Earl of Nottingham. The latter gentleman had the interest of the Ministry in his favour; and he was also supported by Archbishop Wake and others of the Hierarchy, in consideration of the long and powerful services rendered to the Church of England by Lord Nottingham. Thus the High-church party was divided: the Archbishop, anxious for Finch's success, solicited the support of Dr. Colbatch. He was on every account desirous to

¹⁹ Copies of all the documents on this occasion have been furnished to me, from the records of the Court, through the kind intercession of Lord Chief Justice Tindal. Bentley's original draughts of the three first affidavits are found among his papers.

oblige the primate and the Earl of Nottingham ; but his devotion to the cause of Trinity College made him resolve to support no one who was not likely to use his exertions, in and out of Parliament, to procure some hearing and redress for its grievances : accordingly, when he found that Bentley was exerting himself in favour of Finch, and that all his party, who formed a numerous body, were supporting him, he plainly saw that the Petitioners had nothing to hope from that quarter ; and wrote to explain to the Archbishop his inability to comply with his Grace's wishes. The contest which ensued was severe ; but so prevalent were Tory sentiments in the University, that Mr. Willoughby succeeded against the combination of such powerful interests, polling 176 votes, while Mr. Finch had 143. The ministerial party seem to have been much chagrined at this defeat, and there is good reason to believe, that a consideration of the opposite sides taken in this election, by the friends and enemies of the Master of Trinity, had some influence upon the extraordinary occurrences, which are shortly to be the subject of our narrative.

CHAP.
XIV.
1720.

Dec. 14.

CHAPTER XV.

Account of Bentley's children—His intimate acquaintance—Dr. Davies's devotion to him—Second edition of Cicero's Tusculans—Bentley's domestic habits—Progress of his edition of the New Testament—Assistance of Wetstein—John Walker resides at Paris, collating manuscripts for Bentley—Benedictines of St. Maur—Ancient Italic version of the Scriptures—Montfaucon—Bentley's Proposals for publishing the New Testament—His Specimen—Middleton's Remarks on the Proposals—Written in a disgraceful spirit—Various persons suspected of having written the Remarks—Bentley's reasons for thinking that Colbatch had supplied the materials—His reply—Virulent abuse of Colbatch—Colbatch seeks redress for the injury—Bentley's Reply censured by the Heads—Colbatch prosecutes the printer in the Vice-chancellor's Court—Dr. Cross—Middleton's Further Remarks on the Proposals—Reported assistance by Ashton—Letter by Philalethes—Pearce's two Latin Epistles—Dr. Smalbroke's Letter—Mistaken opinion that Bentley's edition was stopped by Middleton's pamphlet—Great extent of the subscription—Fails in his attempt to import paper duty-free—David Casley—Middleton found Guilty of a Libel—Kept in long suspense—Change of Ministry—Act of Grace—The Chief Justice advises a settlement—Middleton begs pardon of Bentley—Pays the costs—Made Principal Librarian of the University.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Account of
Bentley's
children.

THE contentious topics, which have so long engaged our attention, have allowed us no intermission to notice the habits of Dr. Bentley's private life, and the circle of his family and intimate acquaintance. In regard to his progeny, he was eminently happy : his three children are described to have been every thing that the heart of a fond father could desire. His son Richard exhibited extremely quick parts ; and the father determining that he should be educated under his own eye, admitted him a member of Trinity College, while a child of only ten years old. In adopting this uncommon and hazardous plan, he was

probably influenced by the precocious talents of the boy, and imitated the only precedent for such a step which he had ever witnessed, that of his early friend William Wotton¹.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Elizabeth, his eldest daughter, is described by Cumberland, her nephew, 'to have inherited the virtues and benignity of her mother, with habits more adapted to the fashions of the world².' Her younger sister, Joanna, was the object of universal admiration for her beauty, wit, and accomplishments; and she is said, from her earliest youth, to have captivated the hearts of the young collegians. Several hints lead me to infer, that this young lady inherited as large a portion of her father's spirit as could be amiable in so charming a creature. She was his favourite child; and having received from him the fondling appellation of *Jug* in her infancy, she continued to be called *Jug Bentley*, as long as she remained unmarried. Few beauties, even in an University, have ever been so much celebrated as this young nymph; and it was her peculiar fortune to have her praises first sung in her childhood. Mr. John Byrom, a name well known in literary history for his versatile genius, and varied accomplishments, when a Bachelor of Trinity College, wrote, for the amusement of Miss Joanna, a Pastoral, of which she was the Phœbe; and soon afterwards inserted it in the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, to which work he had been an occasional contributor. This piece is still celebrated as one of the most exquisite specimens in existence of playful poetry. Some sagacious critics have observed, that it does not breathe the full spirit of tenderness and passion. One of

¹ Richard Bentley was baptized June, 1708; and admitted of Trinity College *sub tutela Magistri*, in 1718.

² *Cumberland's Memoirs*, 4to. p. 18.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

them doubts whether Colin was ever really in love with his Phœbe ; another has discovered, from private information, that Byrom was not sincere in his attempt upon the heart of Miss Joanna, but being a candidate for a fellowship, took that method of ingratiating himself with her father. Had these commentators happened to look at the dates, they would have discovered that when the poem came forth the young lady was only eleven years old ! It is recorded, that when the papers of the *Spectator* appeared, Dr. Bentley heard them read with much delight. How great must have been the surprise of Phœbe if it was her turn to read on the morning when, instead of an Essay, there appeared the Poem, of which she knew herself to be the subject³.

His intimate acquaintance.

Dr. Bentley continued to pass in College the life of a severe student, relaxing himself in a small and select circle of acquaintance. Of the Fellows admitted to his society, his favourites were Ashenhurst, R. Walker, Witton, Barnwell, and Whitfield : the only persons in the rest of the University with whom he maintained any intimacy were Bishop Bradford, Dr. Davies, and Dr. Brookbank. In London, whither he was now frequently called by the contests into which he had plunged, he enjoyed the society of his old acquaintance Sir Isaac Newton, and Dr. Samuel Clarke ; but more particularly of the celebrated physician, Dr. Mead. This gentleman, the glory of his profession, and universally distinguished by his learning and virtues, remained to the end of our critic's life his firm and zealous friend. Whatever impression

³ *Ibid.* p. 14. "When the *Spectators* were in publication, I have heard my mother say, he (Dr. Bentley) took great delight in hearing them read to him ; and was so particularly amused with the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, that he took his literary decease most seriously to heart." The Pastoral is in Vol. viii. No. 603. Byrom was also the author of Nos. 586 and 587, in the same volume.

the narrative of some late events may have produced upon the reader, Bentley's friends appear to have continued as much devoted to him as ever. Dr. Davies published in 1717 his first edition of *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, prefixed to which is an epistle of dedication to Dr. Bentley, expressing the highest admiration and warmest attachment; he not only praises his learning and talents in glowing terms, but speaks in the language of heartfelt gratitude of his constant kindness and uncommon favours conferred upon himself. The latter topic is somewhat surprising; since, as far as we have means of judging, the debt of gratitude lay wholly on the other side: it was but a short time before this publication that Davies's assistance had placed his friend in the Regius Professor's chair. The dedication itself will be seen in a note; and the reader will easily distinguish its tone of regard and admiration from the cant of adulation, which frequently disgraces such productions. It is incumbent on the biographer of Dr. Bentley, to show in what way he was estimated by the most learned and amiable of his acquaintance ⁴.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Dr. Davies's
devotion to
him.

⁴ "Viro summo RICHARDO BENTLEYO, S. P. D. JOANNES DAVISIUS.

"Si laudibus effundendis destinata fuerat hæc Epistola; vel ob eam causam tuam, Vir præstantissime, nomen præscripsissem: non quod præclarissimæ tuæ dotes meo careant præconio, sed quod nemo me jure posset adulationis incusare, licet eas exquisitissimis encomiis celebrassem. Apud bonos enim in confesso est, æterna illa limatissimi tui judicii, miri acuminis, et in variorum generum literis eximie doctrinæ monumenta, ut a pessimis hic illic carpi queant ingeniis, ab optimis exæquari vix posse.

"Verum alia res erat, quæ hoc tempore non solum non omittenda, sed potissimum agenda videbatur. Nimirum tu, literatissime BENTLEY, universo quidem orbi erudito summum virum, mihi porro fidissimum amicum, te probasti. Quamvis ergo voci publicæ meam lubens adjunxerim; tua tamen singularis in me bonitas flagitat, ut me tibi privatim esse devinctissimum et prædicem et glorier. Tu me modis omnibus ornasti; tu me continuis prosecutus es officiis; et, quod rei caput est, non quotidiano fatigatus convitio, sed ultro, nec rogatus, effusissimam in me benevolentiam tam rebus quam verbis ostendisti. Ingratus igitur essem, si tantam comi-

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Second edi-
tion of Ci-
cero's Tus-
culana.

The devotion of the editor of Cicero to his brother Head, which came little short of idolatry, was exhibited some time afterwards in a still more remarkable light. The whole impression of Davies's edition of the Tusculan Disputations being sold, and a new one called for, Bentley applied himself afresh to this work, and corrected it throughout, introducing a vast number of his own emendations: of these some were sanctioned by the collation of manuscripts, and some rested only upon conjecture, in which, it may be remarked, that he grew bolder as his age advanced. Davies trusting to his friend as he would have done to a Pythian Oracle, printed, instead of the text of his former edition, that of Bentley; alleging in his notes the authority of our mighty Aristarchus, as the sole and sufficient ground for his numerous and daring alterations. The defence of these emendations was intended to come in the Appendix; and Bentley was altering and enlarging his former notes for that purpose: but when the text was printed off, and the booksellers were clamorous for its appearance, those annotations, upon which the

tatem, indulgentiam tantam, mihi sane perhonorificam, tibi, spero, non ignominiosam, silentio præterirem, nec tibi gratias et haberem et agerem maximas.

"Id equidem simpliciter ac sine fuco jam nunc facio, nec facere desinam; hujus autem animi mei pignora, CICERONIS libros de Natura Deorum, mea cura non indiligenter, ut opinor, illustratos et emendatos, tibi, Vir ornatissime, consecro. Quod si benignam nimis opinionem de opere meo conceperim; in eo tamen non fallor, te, quod pro eruditione tua laudare non poteris, pro humanitate tua condonaturum.

"Quodcunque vero de meis lucubrationibus feratur judicium, tuæ certe rectissimo stant talo, et ut, quæ olim edidisti, doctiores omnes legunt avidissime, ita, quæ apud te premis, expectant cupidissime. Honestissimis igitur eorum desideriis noli, quæso, repugnare; sed tum alios egregios animi tui fœtus, tum NOVUM præcipue TESTAMENTUM integritati suæ pristinae restitutum, e scriniis expromas; ut ea ratione tu denuo summam gloriam, nos amplissimos fructus consequamur. Vale, Vir laudatissime, et iis omnibus, quæ DEUS O.M. pretiosissima largiatur, in hac vita diu, in altera semper fruire."

whole fabric of the amended text rested, were not forthcoming. This was in the year 1723; and the overwhelming importance of the transactions shortly to be related, prevented his making up his mind upon every point, and completing the Appendix. Accordingly the book made its appearance, without the only addition which could justify, or render tolerable, the liberties taken with the text of Cicero. As the confidence of other scholars in Bentley's conjectures did not equal that of Davies, who considered them as certain as truth itself, this publication produced no small dissatisfaction, and people were in amazement at such an instance of one scholar's deference to the authority of another; of which the whole history of literature supplied no similar example ⁵.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

The habits of Dr. Bentley's domestic life continued in the same simple and uniform course for many years. The greater part of each day he passed in his study, where he breakfasted alone; he joined his family at the other meals, and at ten o'clock for evening prayers; after which they retired for their night's repose. Habited in his dressing-gown, he pursued his studies with the same application as had distinguished the earlier periods of his life. The tempestuous feuds in which he was now embarked appear neither to have deranged his habits, nor affected his health. The only change which they produced in his course of life was by obliging him to make more frequent journeys to London, and pass a longer time at his residence in Cotton House. Once a year his family accompanied him; at other times he left them in College, travelling himself in the

Bentley's
domestic
habits.

⁵ A specimen of the feeling of foreign scholars on this subject may be seen in an article of the *Miscellanea Observationes*, tom. i. p. 399; which did not appear till 1732, and is rather elaborately written.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

stage-coach. His constitution seems not to have required exercise; nor do I hear of his taking any, except that he sometimes walked on the terrace in his garden. But robust as his health is represented to have been, it was frequently affected by catching cold; a consequence of the recluse life which he generally passed⁶.

Bentley's aversion to letter-writing increased with his years; and he seems for some time to have dropped almost all correspondence, except such as was called for by the imperious claims of business, or was connected with the immediate objects of his literary pursuits, and the publications which he meditated. Peter Burman, who valued his friendship and correspondence in the highest degree, and considered it as the legacy of his master Grævius, was deeply distressed at his protracted silence, which he presumed to arise from some inadvertent offence or omission of his own; and after waiting above two years for a letter, wrote in 1718, imploring to know the cause of the interruption of their correspondence. As his subsequent letters express no further uneasiness on this account, we may presume that Bentley satisfied his friend that his silence was not attributable to alienation of regard.

Progress of
his edition
of the New
Testament.

We must now recall our attention to the Doctor's great undertaking, his edition of the New Testament; to which we have not adverted since its commencement in 1716. Letters and other documents prove, that for the first year he must have been diligently occupied with the work which he had taken in hand with so much spirit. In the two following years the

⁶ These particulars of Dr. Bentley's private life and habits are distinctly told by Ellinger, who was his butler from 1709 to 1719; and by Atkinson, who succeeded to that situation. Both their depositions were given at Ely House in 1733.

imperious call made upon his time by his new professorship, and the extraordinary course of events which ensued, will account for the suspension of this great and laborious work; but it was an error to suppose, as some did, that he had abandoned the idea. So entirely had he resolved to give the world the most perfect text of the New Testament which could be supplied by manuscripts and criticism, that he spared no labour or expense in procuring the requisite materials. He made fresh collations of the two most ancient and precious copies in this country, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, belonging to the Royal Library of which he was Keeper, and the Greek and Latin copy of the Gospels and Acts, given to the University of Cambridge by the great Reformer, Beza. Collations of these manuscripts had already been published; but Bentley found that a more careful and precise examination would amply repay the labour. From the collection of the Earl of Oxford he procured several old manuscripts, which had not been used by Dr. Mill; one of these formerly belonged to the *Bibliothèque du Roi* at Paris, and appears to have been among the treasures stolen from that vast collection by the thief Aymond, and to have come by purchase into the hands of the ex-minister of England. His diligence was exerted likewise in making accurate collations of the manuscripts of the Latin Testament, to which he attached much importance, as conducing to the recovery of that Version in the very state left by St. Jerome. He pursued the important task of collecting the quotations from the New Testament made by the early Fathers. Whatever might be the prevalent sentiment respecting this projected edition, there certainly was exhibited great liberality and readiness in all quarters to aid and facilitate the objects of the

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Assistance
of Wetstein.

1716.

editor. Among other instances we may notice that of his predecessor, Dr. Montague, the Dean of Durham; who allowed some manuscripts from his Chapter Library to be transmitted for the use of the Master of Trinity. His most useful auxiliary at this period was Wetstein, whose acquaintance and communications with him have already been noticed. To serve the purposes of Bentley's edition, this ardent scholar, the ruling passion of whose life was to note various readings in the New Testament, took another journey to Paris, where he passed a few months in collating manuscripts; his time was principally devoted to decyphering a very old vellum copy in the King's Library, which had originally contained the whole Bible in Greek capital letters; the writing had been industriously erased, to make room for certain works of St. Ephrem; the obliteration however was not so perfect but that the original could, in most places, be detected by good eyes⁷. Wetstein wished to continue in this congenial employment at Paris, and in other parts of Europe, provided Bentley would have held out such an inducement as might indemnify him for the sacrifice of his present livelihood: the fact was, that the future editor of the New Testament, although a Swiss by birth and

⁷ Wetstein entered his collation of this manuscript in the margin of a printed copy of the New Testament, on the fly-leaf of which he has written,

"Cum hoc codice collatus est Codex Ephrem MS. in Bibliotheca Regia, Parisiis, 1716.

"Lectio cui Asteriscus præfigitur, non ita certa est ac reliquæ; ita tamen videtur, quantum ex spatio et quibusdam literis non-exesis conjici potest."

Bentley has added, "Codex manuscriptus est plus mille annorum, cui ob fugitivas fere literas jam ante sæcula aliquot superscriptus est Ephraim Syri Liber. Collatio hujus codicis constitit R. Benteio quinquaginta Libris Sterlingis."

Wetstein gives a more detailed account of this copy in his *Prolegomena*, p. 27.

education, was at that time a chaplain in the Dutch army; and the leave of absence given him by his commanding officer was near expiring. Dr. Bentley did not choose to take this hint; and in November following received a letter from his correspondent, dated from his quarters at Bois le Duc, to which he had been compelled to return. In the course of the next year, Wetstein left a situation where he enjoyed neither books nor literary society, and returned to his native city of Basil, as an assistant to his father in his clerical duties: but he was still on the alert to aid the intended edition of the New Testament; and in 1718 communicated to Bentley that he had discovered at Heidelberg a very ancient and valuable Greek and Latin manuscript of St. Paul's Epistles, which had been purchased at his suggestion by his relatives, the Wetsteins of Amsterdam. The Master of Trinity immediately wrote to those booksellers, who, with much liberality, sent him the precious volume, charging only the same sum that they had themselves paid for it, 250 Dutch florins⁸. He now sent further injunctions to his correspondent to collate accurately all ancient Latin copies, which he could meet with, of the Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse. All this Wetstein undertook to do, but plainly intimated that he must have secured to him some other reward for such labour, 'besides weak eyes, and a disqualification for other pursuits⁹.'

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

1717.

July, 1718.

⁸ This valuable manuscript, having formerly belonged to the Monastery of *Augia Major* (Rheinau in Switzerland), is known by the name of *Codex Augiensis*. A full account of it may be seen in Wetstein's preface to the second volume of his Greek Testament, p. 8; and in the Bishop of Peterborough's *Notes to Michaelis*, vol. iii. p. 664. It is now in Trinity Library, along with the rest of Bentley's manuscripts.

⁹ Wetstein has printed the last mentioned letter of Bentley, with his reply, in his *Prolegomena*, p. 153. His other letters are among Bentley's papers. It must be confessed that the pecuniary value which he placed

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

John Wal-
ker.

Bentley, however, did not think fit to purchase the further assistance of Wetstein, having found in his own Society a young man, upon whose fidelity and learning he could securely rely. We have already had occasion to mention the name of Mr. John Walker as one of three excellent scholars, who in 1716 became Fellows of Trinity College. He had been educated at Wakefield school, and was, while an under-graduate, honourably distinguished as the successful candidate for an University scholarship on Lord Craven's foundation, the only prize at that time open to competition. While only Bachelor of Arts he drew up a series of emendations upon Cicero's three books *De Natura Deorum*, and communicated them to Dr. Davies, by whom they were printed as an Appendix to his edition, and are a specimen of proficiency in critical learning highly creditable to so young a man. The Master having noticed and encouraged this promising scholar, and initiated him in the *arcana* of Greek and Latin manuscripts, and the proper methods of examining them, found him a person upon whose diligence and accuracy he might depend. Having now given up the design, which he formerly entertained, of going himself to the Continent to collate manuscripts, he sent Walker to Paris, in the year 1719, for that purpose; and never did an agent acquit himself with more industry or ability in fulfilling the wishes of his principal. He remained nearly a year in that capital, and in that time examined and collated a surprising number of manuscripts; his letters, as well as the collations themselves, testify his zeal and care in the discharge of his commission. The expense of his

Resides at
Paris, col-
lating ma-
nuscripts
for Bentley.

upon his labours was rather high; as it appears that the Doctor paid him 50*l.* for the collation of the MS. Ephrem, just mentioned.

sojourn at Paris, which fell upon Bentley, was considerable; for at that moment the scheme of the notorious Mr. Law, which was to have opened a new mine of wealth to the French nation, drew to the metropolis an extraordinary multitude of strangers, eager to participate in those ideal riches. Walker writes, on Feb. 10, 1720, "Paris has been so dear all this winter, that there is no living in it, but for those people who have dealt in the *actions* of Mississippi: I pay near half more for every thing than I did when I came first here."

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Bentley had formed some acquaintance with the Benedictine monks of St. Maur, at the time when Wetstein was at Paris, and had promised to aid the edition of the works of Origen, then in the hands of De la Rue, one of that body, with a series of emendations on the tract *Περὶ Ἐνχῆς*. This illustrious society contained at that time the Fathers Montfaucon, Martianay, De la Rue, Juillier, Sabatier, and others, who devoted their lives to those laborious and splendid publications which have distinguished them above all other literary fraternities. Walker being introduced to their notice was received and assisted with that kindness and courtesy which has at all periods distinguished the literati of France. His personal merits, his amiable manners, and his skill in decyphering manuscripts attached them greatly to their young acquaintance; and it is pleasing to record the hearty zeal with which they promoted the objects of his mission. Besides communicating all their own manuscripts, and using their interest in procuring collations from their brethren of Angers, they accommodated him with a room and fire in their monastery of St. Germain des Prés for his work, and in order to abridge his task, several of them gave him assistance in the labour of collation.

Benedic-
tines of St.
Maur.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Walker's attention while at Paris was not confined to the manuscripts of the New Testament: he collated several Latin authors, partly to serve the purposes of Bentley's intended editions, and partly to gratify his curiosity: among others was the oldest and best copy of Suetonius; and I discover from a letter of our critic that he was meditating an edition of that historian¹⁰.

Ancient
Italic ver-
sion of the
Scriptures.

A curious circumstance was near losing Bentley the co-operation of the fraternity of St. Germain's. They had been for some time preparing an edition of the ancient Latin versions of the Scriptures in use before the time of St. Jerome, and comparing them with the Vulgate. The two editors, Sabatier and Mopinot, had long laboured in their own and other Parisian libraries, transcribing the numerous versions of an earlier date than the Vulgate, with the view of recovering that identical 'Italic version' which St. Augustine had declared to be preferable to every other. An apprehension now occurred to them that Bentley, if suffered to have transcripts or collations of all their ancient manuscripts, would publish such a list of variations from the common version, found in those copies on which they principally relied, as might in effect anticipate their own undertaking. Upon this there was a demur about admitting Mr. Walker to the use of their manuscripts: and the question was discussed at a meeting of the superiors of the monastery. Here Father Montfaucon, the most distinguished of the body, maintained the cause of Dr. Bentley with an ardour which shows that the spirit of chivalry may

Montfau-
con.

¹⁰ Of this letter, dated Sept. 13, 1719, the only one of Bentley's to Walker which has been preserved, a copy has been obligingly communicated to me by A. J. Valpy, Esq. I understand that all the rest were destroyed by some ignorant executor; a loss which is greatly to be regretted.

find its way into the regions of scholastic literature. He contended that the request of so great a scholar, from whom they had received obligations, ought by all means to be complied with, even though their own undertaking should thereby be prejudiced; declaring that he would rather send the treasures themselves to Cambridge for Bentley's use, than by refusing the indulgence requested, bring a disgrace upon the Benedictine name. His arguments so far prevailed, that they determined to write and ascertain the precise character of the new edition, adding an assurance that they would render it all the assistance in their power, consistent with justice due to their own brethren. To this inquiry, conveyed in a most courteous letter from Father Thuillier, Bentley returned a satisfactory answer, informing them that his edition, the main object of which was to recover the Latin version as left by St. Jerome, would in no respect interfere with their intended publication. But at the same time they learned an opinion of our Aristarchus respecting their undertaking, which must have occasioned them no small surprise and dismay. Our only knowledge of the character or existence of the ancient 'Italic version,' which it was the object of the Benedictine work to recover, is found in the following sentence of St. Augustine: *In ipsis autem Interpretationibus ITALIA ceteris præferatur; nam est tenacior verborum, cum perspicuitate sententiæ.* As there is no mention anywhere else of one among the numerous Latin versions, which was peculiarly known by the name of 'Italic,' and as it was probable that, had such been the case, St. Augustine would rather have termed it *Italica* than *Itala*, Bentley exercised upon these words of the Father his critical ingenuity; and thought he discovered the true reading to be, *ILLA ceteris præferatur, QUÆ est tenacior verborum, &c.*; accordingly, he pro-

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

nounced the *Italic version* to be a mere chimæra. This conjecture is very plausible, and ingeniously supported : but the question is still open to much doubt ; and nothing which I have yet seen has quite satisfied me either of the correctness of the old reading or of Bentley's emendation. I shall, however, say no more in this place, than that a subsequent correction by Archbishop Potter, *USITATA* for *Itala*, which has received the approbation of high authority in our own times, appears to me somewhat less probable than that of Dr. Bentley¹¹. The Benedictines received the communication of their learned correspondent not only with good-humour, but thankfulness ; they instantly laid open their treasures to Walker, whose behaviour and learning speedily rendered them his personal friends ; and an unreserved intercourse of good offices was maintained between the convent of St. Germain's and Trinity Lodge : Bentley sent them, among other things, a collation of the Latin version in the Beza manuscript ; and when, after the lapse of twenty years, their splendid publication made its appearance, he was mentioned in a manner befitting the first scholar of the age¹².

Bentley's
proposals
for publish-
ing his New
Testament.

Upon the return of Walker from his mission in the year 1720, Bentley, having availed himself of the large accession to his stock of materials brought by

¹¹ The Archbishop's correction proceeded upon the idea of a transcriber having omitted to repeat *us* in *usitata*, the same letters being found at the end of the preceding word *Interpretationibus* : the remaining word *ITATA* might then naturally be altered to *Itala*. This emendation is approved by the Bishop of Peterborough in his notes on Michaelis, and subsequently by Archdeacon Wrangham in his edition of *Walton's Prolegomena*, tom. ii. p. 271. But it has never yet been shown that the Common Version was known by the bare title of *Usitata*.

¹² The letters of the Benedictine Fathers, as well as those of Mr. Walker, have been preserved among Bentley's papers. An extract from Bentley's letter on this subject is given by Sabatier in the preface to *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latine Versiones Antiquæ*, &c. p. 31.

that zealous agent, found himself in a condition to lay his undertaking before the public. The great expense of the work, and the uncertainty of its sale, having determined him to publish by subscription, he put forth a printed sheet containing a concise account of the object and nature of the intended edition, along with a specimen of its execution. From these proposals, which will be seen in a note, a clear idea may be drawn of the design: the promise of abstaining from conjectural emendation, as too hazardous a mode of dealing with the sacred text, was intended to obviate a general apprehension which Bentley knew to prevail, that he was likely to take the same liberties as he was accustomed to do with profane writers. The price of the two folio volumes being fixed at three and five guineas respectively for the small and large paper, must even at that day have been moderate; and the allotment of half the profits of the publication to Mr. Walker as a remuneration for the trouble of correcting the press, appears an instance of great liberality to his young assistant¹³. The spe-

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

His specimen.

¹³ “H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ. Græce. NOVUM TESTAMENTUM, Versionis Vulgatæ, per S^{um} Hieronymum ad vetusta Exemplaria Græca castigatæ et exactæ. Utrumque ex antiquissimis Codd. MSS. cum Græcis tum Latinis, edidit RICHARDUS BENTLEYUS.

“ PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING.

“ I. The author of this edition, observing that the printed copies of the New Testament, both of the original Greek and ancient vulgar Latin, were taken from manuscripts of no great antiquity, such as the first editors could then procure; and that now by God’s Providence there are MSS. in Europe, (accessible, though with great charge) above a thousand years old in both languages; believes he may do good service to common Christianity, if he publishes a new edition of the Greek and Latin, not according to the recent and interpolated copies, but as represented in the most ancient and venerable MSS. in Greek and Roman capital letters.

“ II. The author, revolving in his mind some passages of St. Hierom; where he declares, that (without making a new version) he adjusted and

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

cimen consisted of the 22d chapter of the Apocalypse, the text being restored according to the reasons and authorities given in his notes, with the common read-

reformed the whole Latin Vulgate to the best Greek exemplars, that is, to those of the famous Origen; and another passage, where he says, that 'a verbal or literal interpretation out of Greek into Latin is not necessary, except in the Holy Scriptures, *Ubi ipse verborum ordo mysterium est*, where the very order of the words is mystery;' took thence the hint, that if the oldest copies of the original Greek and Hierom's Latin were examined and compared together, perhaps they would be still found to agree both in words and order of words. And upon making the essay, he has succeeded in his conjecture, beyond his expectations or even his hopes.

"III. The author believes that he has retrieved (except in very few places) the true exemplar of Origen, which was the standard to the most learned of the Fathers, at the time of the Council of Nice and two centuries after. And he is sure, that the Greek and Latin MSS., by their mutual assistance, do so settle the original text to the smallest nicety, as cannot be performed now in any Classic author whatever: and that out of a labyrinth of thirty thousand various readings, that crowd the pages of our present best editions, all put upon equal credit to the offence of many good persons; this clue so leads and extricates us, that there will scarce be two hundred out of so many thousands that can deserve the least consideration.

"IV. To confirm the lections which the author places in the text, he makes use of the old versions, Syriac, Coptic, Gothic and Æthiopic, and of all the Fathers, Greeks and Latins, within the first five centuries; and he gives in his notes all the various readings (now known) within the said five centuries. So that the reader has under one view what the first ages of the Church knew of the text; and what has crept into any copies since, is of no value or authority.

"V. The author is very sensible, that in the Sacred Writings there's no place for conjectures or emendations. Diligence and fidelity, with some judgment and experience, are the characters here requisite. He declares, therefore, that he does not alter one letter in the text without the authorities subjoined in the notes. And to leave the free choice to every reader, he places under each column the smallest variations of this edition, either in words or order, from the received Greek of Stephanus, and the Latin of the two Popes Sixtus V. and Clements VIII. So that this edition exhibits both itself, and the common ones.

"VI. If the author has any thing to suggest towards a change of the text, not supported by any copies now extant, he will offer it separate in his Prolegomena; in which will be a large account of the several MSS. here used, and of the other matters which contribute to make this edition useful. In this work he is of no sect or party; his design is to serve the whole Christian name. He draws no consequences in his notes; makes no oblique glances upon any disputed points, old or new. He consecrates

ings in the margin. The selection of the last chapter of the New Testament, was probably designed to intimate, what was really the fact, that the whole work was in an equal state of forwardness. There might indeed have been an additional reason for this preference: he had not yet obtained collations of the Vatican and some other old MSS. of the Gospels; but those copies not containing the Apocalypse, a specimen taken from thence was equally perfect in their absence.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

These Proposals were put forth at the critical time, when Bentley was resisting the attempt of his enemies to deprive him of his professorship; and an opinion was propagated, that his object was only to interest the public in favour of a person who was devoting his knowledge and abilities to so meritorious an undertaking. It was recollected that he had on similar occasions made successful efforts to occupy the public mind by his literary productions; and it was insinuated that he had not really prepared his edition, but that the whole was a vain pretext, to be abandoned as soon as it had answered its temporary

October,
1720.

this work, as a *κειμήλιον*, a *κτῆμα ἐσας*, a Charter, a Magna Charta, to the whole Christian Church; to last when all the ancient MSS. here quoted may be lost and extinguished.

“VII. To publish this work, according to its use and importance, a great expense is requisite: it is designed to be printed, not on the paper or with the letter of this specimen, but with the best letter, paper, and ink that Europe affords. It must, therefore, be done by subscription or contribution. As it will make two tomes in folio, the lowest subscriptions for smaller paper must be three guineas, one advanced in present; and for the great paper five guineas, two advanced.

“VIII. The work will be put to the press, as soon as money is contributed to support the charge of the impression; and no more copies will be printed than are subscribed for. The overseer and corrector of the press will be the learned Mr. JOHN WALKER, of Trinity College in Cambridge; who with great accurateness has collated many MSS. at Paris for the present edition. And the issue of it, whether gain or loss, is equally to fall on him and the author.”

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

purpose. To these suspicions Bentley himself added force by a strange indiscretion, of which we find more than one instance in his latter years. The proposals and the specimen were drawn up, according to his own confession, in haste one evening by candle-light: the whole sheet bore marks of precipitation; and, what was worse, a sentence from St. Jerome, upon which he greatly relied, was misquoted, as it appears, from a slip of the pen; whereby he subjected himself to the imputation of falsifying authorities for the sake of supporting his hypothesis about the Latin version¹⁴. The truth is, that it never occurred to him as probable that his present adversaries, keen and inveterate as they were, would think of attacking him in the department of criticism; and a paper of proposals, which he regarded only in the light of an advertisement, did not seem to demand that care and circumspection which he reserved for the publication itself.

Middleton's
Remarks on
the Pro-
posals.

It is painful to narrate the animosity and virulence which displayed themselves upon such a subject as a new edition of the Gospel of Peace. Middleton, inflamed with resentment against his great adversary,

¹⁴ Bentley himself, in his printed defence of his proposals, makes a distinct confession of this haste and of its effects:

"We come now to the second passage, quoted by our Master, *UBI IPSE VERBORUM ORDO MYSTERIUM EST*, which our Censor works and sweats at for three whole pages together; resolving to undermine and demolish it, as the sole basis of the new edition."

"You'll please, Sir, to believe, when I tell you, that our Master's Proposals being drawn up in haste, in one evening by candle-light, and printed the next day from that first and sole draught, (which haste likewise hindered him from revising the sheet, and so left several false accents and points in the specimen itself,) he consulted not St. Hierom, but cited the passage by memory: whereby it happened, that for *ubi et verborum ordo*, he put *ubi ipse verborum ordo*. But, that *et* and *ipse* have the very same meaning here, every school-boy can see: 'tis just as in English, where *even the order of words, or the very order of words, are perfectly equivalent*."—*Dr. Bentley's Proposals*, &c. p. 18, 19.

and indignant at the prosecution then hanging over him, perceived on the perusal of the Proposals, that Bentley had laid open some weak points, and that a skilful enemy might make a successful assault upon his credit. Accordingly he lost no time in writing Remarks upon the Proposals, taking to pieces every paragraph and every sentence, with a determination to find Bentley wrong in all his assertions, and unequal to his undertaking. The avowed object of this tract was to prevent the public being deluded by the bold promises of the author of the Proposals, whom he believed to have 'neither talents nor materials proper for the work he had undertaken;' or, in other words, to defeat the projected subscription. Middleton not only attacks his adversary with learning and argument upon the few points in the Proposals which admitted of a difference of opinion, but indulges the most captious and ill-natured sneers at almost every expression, however innocent or indifferent. There can scarcely be found a sentence in his book which is not dictated by the spirit of malice and unfairness. An instance or two of this determined injustice will be sufficient to betray the temper of the writer: he charges Bentley with not dealing honourably towards his partner, Mr. John Walker, 'to whom he allotted half the profit, and *almost all the trouble of this work*, yet reserved the whole reputation of it to himself—an unblushing misstatement of the fact. He accuses him of treating the first editors of the Greek Testament with 'barbarity and injustice,' in his opening paragraph. This is passionate language and speaks ill for the heart of the man who could use it: Bentley's account of the manuscript sources of those early editions was only such as Middleton must have known in his conscience to be true. In the same class may be placed the

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

complaints of 'ingratitude' displayed to Dr. Mill, 'inconsistency' with passages found in his Remarks on Free-thinking and his Sermon on Popery, and an imputation of total ignorance of the Oriental languages. But the writer's sheer personal malice shows itself most when he speaks of Bentley publishing by subscription (of which resource, by the bye, no person ever availed himself more beneficially than Middleton himself, in his Life of Cicero); 'we find,' says he, 'in these two paragraphs such sordid insinuations, such low and paltry higgling to squeeze our money from us, &c. &c., that it puts me in mind of those mendicants in the streets, who beg our charity with an *half sheet of proposals* pinned upon their breasts.' This happening to occur in the South-sea year, and in the height of the mania speculation, he makes a dextrous use of the coincidence :

" But, indeed, most people are agreed in opinion, that he has borrowed his scheme from Change-Alley, and in this age of bubbles, took the hint to set up one of his own : for having invented a rare secret to make paper more durable than parchment, and a printed book, however used and tumbled about, to out-last any manuscript preserved with the greatest care, he presently takes in a partner, opens books for subscriptions, and does not in the least question but that *Bentley's Bubble* will be as famous and profitable as the best of them."—*Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph*, p. 18.

Written in
a disgrace-
ful spirit.

What makes this publication peculiarly disgraceful to Dr. Middleton is, that he gave his powerful aid to support the prejudices of those who condemned all attempts at correcting the common text of Scripture. It is well known that there long continued a superstitious feeling in favour of the precise words of the *textus receptus*, even where the readings of manuscripts were demonstrably preferable, and an undefined dread of sacred criticism, as tending to disturb the text which had acquired a kind of prescription.

Middleton's character and turn of mind were sure to make him view such apprehensions in their proper light; but his malice against Bentley rendered him unscrupulous as to the means by which he endeavoured to injure him; and he therefore lent his support to the ill-founded clamour to which he well knew that every critical edition of the Scriptures was equally exposed.

The appearance of so smart an attack upon our veteran critic excited great sensation in the literary republic: the author only styled himself 'a Member of the University of Cambridge;' and various persons, whose studies were considered to lie in that department, were immediately conjectured to have produced this well-written and formidable tract. Some attributed it to Dr. Colbatch, some to Dr. Waterland; while other guesses fixed upon Mr. Pearce of Trinity, Mr. Newcome of St. John's, and Mr. Thirlby of Jesus. Middleton, whose pursuits were not supposed to be of a theological nature, seems hardly to have been suspected; but he soon put an end to all surmises, by avowing the piece; and to prevent Bentley's resentment from fastening upon a wrong object, he took care to do this in the hearing of some of his intimate friends. The aggrieved critic, roused by this daring attack, resolved upon an immediate reply. The whole of Middleton's book was composed in so bad a spirit, that had Bentley confined himself to a dignified exposure of his malice, and refutation of his cavils, he would certainly have inflicted a severe punishment upon his enemy, and might perhaps have turned the tide of popular opinion in his own favour. But he was now no longer the same person as formerly: a course of violent animosities, and the indulgence of unrestrained indignation for many years, had impaired

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Various
persons sus-
pected of
having
written the
Remarks.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

both his taste and judgment in controversy, and he forgot that whoever insults and abuses an adversary, neglects his own dignity, and is sure to be a sufferer in the conflict. It must be allowed, that in this instance, he had given no provocation ; it was clear that the enemy with whom he had to deal was both malicious and inveterate ; and that enemy he knew to be Dr. Middleton. But he was also aware that a close confederacy existed between him and Dr. Colbatch, by whom he had been supplied with the materials for the pamphlet about his administration of the College for which he was then under prosecution ; and a strong suspicion possessed him, that the same was the case in regard to the present publication. This notion was altogether erroneous ; but Colbatch had given some cause for it, by declaring, in the hearing of the Master's friends, when the Proposals were first shown him in the College Hall, that ' the whole was a sham ; that no such design was really intended ; and that these were Bentley's *veteres artes*, to interest the public in his favour when under prosecution : ' a similar insinuation respecting ' the time, manner, and other circumstances of the Proposals ' occurs in Middleton's pamphlet : where was also found another remark, coinciding with one uttered at the same time by Colbatch. Independently of this suspicion, the Master was irritated at the incessant applications which he knew that his opponent in the Seniority was still making to persons in power, to procure a visitation of the College ; and he was much galled at his late defeat

Bentley's
reasons for
thinking
Colbatch
had supplied
the materials.

His Reply. in the affair of the rectory of Orwell. Accordingly, he gave full vent to his spleen and resentment in a Reply which assumed Dr. Colbatch to be the undoubted author of the Remarks, and abused him without compunction and without decency. Of Mid-

dleton he only took a contemptuous notice, as the publisher of the other's libels, and hinted that he was already 'in danger of the pillory.' As for the presumed censor, he spoke of him at the very outset in the following terms :

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

"The author at the first publishing might have been called Legion; for as his party is discovered in his very title-page, where our Master is named *Richard Bentley* without the honour of his degree; so of that party every one that was thought to have conceitedness and malice enough to write it, was suspected to be the author. But a day or two cleared up that point. The known image of the true author was stamped so visible on it, that all suspicions soon centred in one. But his name I will not foul my letter with, since he himself thought it too scandalous for his own pamphlet. Nor is posterity concerned in the matter; for whenever he's carried to the grave, his memory will be buried with him. Let his name, therefore, be Suffenus, or Zoilus, or Margites, or Timon, or which you please of these old heroes, whose shining characters were in whole or part so exactly like our author's."

He takes care, however, to leave no doubt as to the person designated, by perpetual references to his Casuistical professorship; styling him 'a casuistic drudge,' a 'plodding pupil of Escobar,' &c.; speaks of his residence in Portugal, his dissatisfaction with 'his two patrons, a noble Duke and a great Bishop;' charges him with ingratitude to himself, 'who had been, though the lowest, not the least of his benefactors;' says that 'a College squabble is necessary to keep up his spirits:—' "In the midst of College plenty, with five thousand pounds surplusage above all expenses, he can bawl, with tragical tone, and lungs stronger than a smith's bellows, *Destruction, Dilapidation, Ruin*, upon the laying out of five

Virulent
abuse of
Colbatch.

"*Dr. Bentley's Proposals for printing a New Edition of the Greek Testament, and St. Hierom's Latin Version. With a Full Answer to the Remarks of a late Pamphleteer, p. 9.*

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

pounds¹⁶.”—“ He never broaches a piece of mere knavery, without a preface about his conscience; nor ever offers to us downright nonsense, without eyes, muscles, and shoulders wrought up into the most solemn posture of gravity¹⁷.”—“ Commend me to the man, who with a thick hide and solid forehead, can stand bluff against plain matter of fact¹⁸.”—“ We need go no further than this paragraph for a specimen of the greatest malice and impudence, that any scribbler out of the dark committed to paper¹⁹.” These passages, and a hundred others equally insulting, with the abusive terms ‘ cabbage-head,’ ‘ insect,’ ‘ worm,’ ‘ maggot,’ ‘ vermin,’ ‘ gnawing rat,’ ‘ snarling dog,’ ‘ ignorant thief,’ ‘ mountebank,’ and many more taken from the vocabulary of Billingsgate, are interlarded with the personal epithets ‘ hard-faced,’ ‘ grinning,’ ‘ swarthy,’ ‘ of intellect as dark as his countenance,’ ‘ opening his wide jaws with an agreeable yawn,’ ‘ *smiling horrible*, like Satan in Milton:’ but all taken together do not come up to another device for hurting the feelings of Dr. Colbatch: he insinuates that he was under the repute of craziness and madness, and attributes his censures ‘ to the influence of the moon.’ To this reflection, for which there was not the least foundation, he endeavours to give some colour, by allusion to the eccentricity of his brother, the Rev. George Colbatch, saying that ‘ he had a brother here in the neighbourhood, a harmless, quiet clergyman, and much the better of the two, who had taken a fancy, from a vow or a vision, to wear in the flower of his age a

¹⁶ *Dr. Bentley's Proposals for printing a New Edition of the Greek Testament, and St. Hierom's Latin Version. With a Full Answer to the Remarks of a late Pamphleteer*, p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 24.

beard to his girdle, sufficient for a Greek Patriarch ²⁰.'

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

Had these vulgar and personal invectives been collected together in one place, like those vented against Æschines by his illustrious rival, they might have been passed over by the reader, and the rest of Dr. Bentley's book have been perused with interest and approbation. But unfortunately there occur in every paragraph, and almost every sentence, such instances of bitterness against his imaginary antagonist, as would occasion disgust even were the subject one of profane literature. But what would in other cases have been an offence against taste and good manners, became, in a debate upon the text of the New Testament, a source of positive scandal, injurious to the cause of piety and religion. Thus did Bentley, although the person unfairly assailed, and in spite of his advantage of having the best cause, excite by his Reply an universal prejudice against himself; which neither his close and argumentative reasoning, nor the occasional scintillations of genius, worthy of his better days, could counteract.

The title-page only declares the author to be 'A Member of Trinity College, Cambridge;' and the pamphlet invariably speaks of Dr. Bentley in the third person, as 'our Master.' But the signature of J. E. the two first vowels in the names of *Richard Bentley*, and the undisguised allusions which run throughout the piece, prove that the veil was so thin as not even to be designed to conceal the author. The whole is written in a style of gaiety and confidence, and betrays the feeling with which he anticipated a triumph over his adversaries not less signal

²⁰ Dr. Bentley's *Proposals for printing a new Edition of the Greek Testament*, &c. p. 39. G. Colbatch was of Christ's College, A.B. 1691, and Minister of Abington, near Cambridge.

CHAP.
XV.
1720.

than that which had attended him in the controversy upon Phalaris ²¹.

January,
1720-21.
Colbatch
seeks re-
dress for the
injury.

This extraordinary production appeared at the beginning of the year, and excited a sensation still greater than that of Middleton had done. Colbatch, roused to indignation at the libel on his character, resolved to seek satisfaction by every legal and practicable method. His first step was to print a short paper, disavowing altogether the 'Remarks' which were made the pretext for the attack, and denying the truth of other assertions contained in Bentley's book. He next displayed his reverence for the statutes of his College, by applying to the Vice-master to take cognizance, in conjunction with the other Senior Fellows, of the feud between the Master and himself: but this appeal promised little satisfaction. The feeble Mr. Modd, now sinking under the weight of age, excused himself, on the score of his infirmities, from taking any step in the business: but Bentley going to town in a few days, and a College meeting being held upon other matters, Colbatch exhibited the libel, and obtained from the majority a vote that it was 'false, scandalous, and

²¹ Instances of this retrospective triumph are seen in the two mottoes:

Cum arum labor est angues superare mearum.

Tollentemque minas et sibila colla tumentem Dejico—

And again in the fifteenth page:

"But now prepare for a stabbing push, a piece of capital and transcendent wit. Are manuscripts 'now accessible?' 'it's very certain then,' says he, 'that library-keepers abroad have more humanity and less envy, than some I could name at home.' What a pity 'tis, that this sparkling repartee is not new and his own; but borrowed from old Phalaris, *Pro singulari sua humanitate*? And methinks the very omen of it might have kept our Censor's fingers from pilfering such unlucky goods; from stealing cotton at Marseilles, while infected with the plague.

Ah, quæ te mala mens, miselle Timon?

— *Tunc etiam telis moriere Dianæ?"*

Dr. Bentley's Proposals, &c. p. 15.

malicious ; and that if it should appear to have been written, as it professed, by a member of the College, the author should be proceeded against according to statute.' Brabourn, however, one of those who concurred in this censure, shortly afterwards recanted ; nor was it ever entered in the College register. But, on referring the case to the Heads of Colleges, Dr. Colbatch obtained a public and substantial redress : they decided at once that he was the individual injured by the libel, and that cognizance ought to be taken of it as a violation of academical decorum ; but they would not admit that the vehement presumption, which pointed at the Master of Trinity as the author, could be taken as a proof of the fact. However, after a long discussion, they agreed to censure the book in the strongest terms which could be used ; declaring that ' Dr. Colbatch had just ground of complaint ;' pronouncing ' the book to be a most virulent and scandalous libel, highly injurious to Dr. Colbatch, contrary to good manners, and a notorious violation of the statutes and discipline of the University ;' and adding, ' that the author of the libel, as soon as he was discovered, should receive such censure as the statutes did in that case appoint.'

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Bentley's
Reply cen-
sured by
the Heads.

This declaration, subscribed by the names of the whole meeting, among whom was Dr. Waterland, the former friend and ally of Bentley, was immediately printed and circulated by the authority of the Heads ; and ought to have contented the aggrieved party, as the most effectual satisfaction for injured fame which the case admitted. But Colbatch's feelings were too sore to allow him to rest here ; he considered it a duty not to desist till he had procured a personal censure of his enemy ; and he thought the agitation of the question likely to draw attention to the grievances of his College. Accordingly he

Colbatch
prosecutes
the printer
in the Vice-
chancel-
lor's Court.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

instituted a prosecution in the Vice-chancellor's Court against Crownfield, the University printer and bookseller, for having sold the obnoxious pamphlet ; calculating that this proceeding must procure a public announcement of the author.

Dr. Crosse. The chief-magistracy was now held by Dr. Crosse, who had in the preceding year become Master of Catherine Hall, on the resignation of Dean Sherlock. This gentleman being attached to the ruling party of the University, could safely be entrusted by his brethren with the authority which Dr. Gooch had held for three successive years : accordingly, he was elected Vice-chancellor in 1720, although Dr. Andrew Snape, the new Provost of King's College, was entitled, as his senior, to the precedence²². Crosse appears to have been a quiet and timid man, determined to avoid if possible a collision with the person who had so long kept the place in agitation. He discouraged the institution of this suit as much as he could ; and after two hearings, intimated to Colbatch his opinion that judgment must be given in the bookseller's favour, as it did not appear that he had sold the tract after it had been declared a libel. Upon the prosecutor hinting that he should appeal to the Senate against such a decision, the case was adjourned ; Dr. Crosse being resolved to escape, by procrastination, from the difficulties which threatened all proceedings in this business. But an anxiety was shown by him as well as the other Heads, to testify such a sense of Colbatch's merits as might soothe his wounded spirit. A suitable occasion for so doing had just occurred : Dr. Gastrell, the Bishop of Chester, had stood forward as the champion of the

²² On this occasion Bentley's friends voted for Snape. The numbers were for Dr. Snape 44, Dr. Crosse 70.

two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, in refusing to institute Mr. Peploe, the newly-appointed Warden of Manchester College, as not having a degree in theology. He had indeed obtained the title of B.D. from the Archbishop of Canterbury; but the Bishop maintained, both by an action and in a pamphlet, that Lambeth degrees could not be recognized as a qualification. It was thought that this prelate's zealous and able defence of the rights and privileges of the Universities, deserved the public thanks of those bodies. About the same time the Earl of Nottingham had nobly exerted himself in defence of the Christian faith, by his answer to Whiston's 'Letter on the Eternity of the Son of God,' and entitled himself to the thanks of those seats of religious education. It was therefore designed that solemn thanks, decreed by the Senate, should be presented both to the Bishop and the Earl, by Dr. Colbatch in company with Dr. Waterland. This honourable mission, so well calculated to testify the feelings of the University in his favour, Dr. Colbatch thought proper, even when pressed, to decline; and he did this, by his own statement, not without ill-humour; alleging, that 'it was not fit that one who had such a slur upon him, should appear before persons of honour;' thereby evincing a degree of petulance unworthy of his character²³.

In the meantime hostilities continued between Bentley and his adversaries in all the methods of law, controversy, and personal altercation. Colbatch wrote a very severe and cutting reply to the late attack upon himself; but he was prevented from giving it to the

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

²³ The account of these matters is taken from Colbatch's Manuscript Journal. Upon his refusal, Dr. Lany and Dr. Waterland were appointed by the Senate to convey the thanks of the University to the Bishop of Chester and the Earl of Nottingham, by a Grace, April 22, 1721.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Middleton's
Further Re-
marks on
the Pro-
posals.

public by the advice of friends, who represented the impropriety of seeking redress at the same moment both from the law and the press. Middleton, however, pressed the war in a more effectual manner. He lost no time in writing a rejoinder to Bentley's Answer, which appeared in about three months, under the title of 'Some Further Remarks, Paragraph by Paragraph, upon Proposals lately published for a new edition of a Greek and Latin Testament, by Richard Bentley.' To this pamphlet, which was four times as long as his former, Middleton prefixed his name, and explained in his preface the state of the contest, and the wilful mistake which Bentley had committed in assigning his first remarks to Dr. Colbatch. This is an able and masterly production, every way worthy of its author's exalted reputation for talent and ingenuity. He shows himself a consummate master of all the arts of controversy; and although every sentence is influenced by hatred of his antagonist, he is generally able to veil his spirit with the dress of learning and argument. In this respect he maintains a great advantage over Bentley, the abusiveness of whose pamphlet is barefaced and intolerable. The topics are professedly the same as those of his preceding piece; but in support of his positions he adduces a variety of new arguments, and displays a much more extensive acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers. Every thing is disposed in the most lucid arrangement: all the writings of his antagonist were industriously sifted for passages upon which charges might be grounded of arrogance and inconsistency: to injure his moral and literary character, no method seemed in the eyes of Dr. Middleton to be unfair: *dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirat?* The two weak points of Bentley's Proposals were, first, his attaching too much importance to his supposed discovery of the

Vulgate Latin always following the exact order of the Greek words; which was in truth only a plausible hypothesis, not safely to be acted upon in revising the Greek text; and, secondly, the acknowledged hurry in which the printed specimen had been sent to the press. Both these topics his adversary urged with much sarcasm, and still greater malevolence. He was aware that Bentley had, by the violence of his last publication, placed himself under a cloud; and he wrote as one who felt that he was trampling his enemy to pieces. His concluding denunciation of sticking to him as close as possible, is sufficiently curious to be cited:

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

“Being conscious, however, of no offence that my ‘name’ has ever given, nor of any ‘infamy’ upon it, to make it odious to any man but himself, I am not ashamed of producing it. And since it is, as he says, ‘to die with me,’ and be ‘buried shortly in oblivion’, he must excuse me the reasonable ambition of making the most of it while I live; and that I may have some chance of being known likewise to posterity, I am resolved to fasten myself upon him, and stick as close to him as I can, in hopes of being dragged at least by his great name out of my present obscurity, and of finding some place, though an humble one, in the future annals of his story.”—*Some Further Remarks, &c.* p. 70. *Middleton’s Works*, vol. ii. p. 436.

That Middleton has succeeded in securing himself a place, and a prominent one, ‘in the annals of Bentley’s story,’ must be acknowledged; and it may be added that no one of the countless publications written against our hero ever displayed so much ability, or inflicted so severe a blow, as that now under our consideration. But that he has thereby elevated his own reputation in the eyes of posterity, as much as he has depressed that of his enemy, is not equally certain. The reader will find in it a beautiful style, acute reasoning, extensive learning, well-sustained humour, and all the accomplishments

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

of a perfect controversialist ; but he will look in vain for the sincerity and candour of a fair adversary, whose object is the establishment of truth.

Reported
assistance
of Ashton.

It has been generally believed that Middleton was assisted in this piece by Dr. Ashton, the Master of Jesus College ; who is well known on some occasions to have aided by his learning the productions of his friends. But this fact rests upon uncertain tradition : I find no hint of it in any contemporary writing ; and though it is not improbable that he might have supplied Middleton with detached hints or references to the Fathers (the controversy being a matter of general conversation in the University), yet there is no necessity for any such supposition ; there is no part of the book which appears above the reach or the learning of Middleton, whose attention had been for some months closely devoted to the subject ²⁴.

The reader must have observed that it was the common fortune of Bentley's publications to provoke a controversy : in this instance, the mere announcement of his intended edition of the New Testament gave birth to an extensive discussion. Besides the far-famed tracts of Middleton, there appeared some other pieces which it will here be convenient to notice.

Letter by
Philaethes.

The first was ' A Letter to the Reverend Master of Trinity College, Cambridge,' signed by ' *Philaethes*,' a most severe banter, in which virulence and insult are conveyed in pages abounding with wit and scholarship. The author of this attack is unknown ; but he speaks of himself as a Trinity man. There appeared also two able, judicious, and scholar-like Latin Epistles from the hands of Mr. Zachary Pearce,

Pearce's
two Latin
Epistles.

²⁴ The late Dr. Parr, who used to take great interest in discussing the merits of Dr. Middleton, held that in this controversy he was indebted to Dr. Ashton : but when I inquired of him the authority for this opinion, he confessed that it rested only upon tradition.

who, assuming the title of *Phileleutherus Londinensis*, gave a fair and just estimate of the probable merits of the intended edition, as far as could be inferred from the proposals and specimen. He proceeded to examine the various conjectural emendations of passages in the Scriptures which Bentley had advanced in different publications, but which in the intended edition were to be confined to the *Prolegomena*: afterwards, in his second epistle, he propounded and defended a series of conjectures of his own. Pearce's learning is considerable and well applied; and while he speaks of Bentley with the praise due to his merits in literature, he fairly points out those particulars in his critical character which made him less qualified for his present than his former undertakings. Notwithstanding this veil of candour, it is not difficult to discover, that the real object of the Lord Chancellor's chaplain was to bring forward his own merits, and to found a reputation by mixing himself in a controversy which the name of Bentley rendered generally interesting²⁵. The last pamphlet to be noticed appeared in the shape of a 'Letter to Archdeacon Bentley,' on the subject of the Complutensian edition: like the rest it is anonymous, but was

²⁵ The title of this book is *Epistolæ Duæ ad Celeberrimum Doctissimumque Virum F—— V——, Professorem Amstelodamensem scriptæ. Quarum in altera agitur de Editione Novi Testamenti a Clarissimo Benleio suscepta, &c. &c. Londini, 1721.* Pearce, at the beginning of his first letter, informs his supposed correspondent at Amsterdam of the depressed state of learning in England at that moment (the heat of the South-sea speculation), the thirst for money having extended itself to scholars, and abstracted them from all literary pursuits not attended with profit. He says, "Fatendum est tamen scientiarum illam veterem sitim paulum hic jam restinctam videri, nostrosque homines plerumque divites malle quam doctos audire. Juvenemne aliquem ad arduum quoddam aut philologiæ aut philosophiæ opus edendum hortaris? Instat subito et respondet, Quid inde commodi, subductis omnibus impensis, ad me venturum est? Scilicet ea argenti cupido, quæ olim bibliopolis solum, nunc ipsis authoribus insedit." p. 2.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Dr. Smal-
broke's
Letter.

understood to be the production of Dr. Richard Smalbroke, a controversial writer of eminence, who was shortly afterwards elevated to the Bench as Bishop of St. David's²⁶. His object was to uphold the disputed verse of 1 John v. 7, by arguing that its insertion by the Complutensian editors must be owing to their finding it in some of the Greek manuscripts sent for their use by Pope Leo X. and that it probably was taken from that most ancient manuscript, which is pre-eminently known by the name of the Vatican, which he thought was one of those sent from Italy to Alcala, for the purposes of the edition : and he urged, that it was incumbent upon Bentley, before he finally decided on rejecting this verse in his edition, to employ able persons to examine the Vatican and the libraries of Spain, in order to ascertain that point. The same opinion of the authority of the Complutensian edition continued to be held long after this period ; but it has now been ascertained beyond a doubt, that the Vatican was *not* used in revising the text of that oldest printed copy of the Scriptures²⁷ ; and every topic has been exhausted which can bear on either side of the controversy upon the genuineness of the verse.

Mistaken
opinion that
Bentley's
edition was
stopped by
Middleton's
pamphlet.

These various pieces were entirely eclipsed by Middleton's ' Further Remarks,' in which it was generally conceived that he had obtained a complete victory over Bentley, and that the certain consequence would be the abandonment of his scheme of a new edition : and when it was found that the publi-

²⁶ ' *Enquiry into the Authority of the Primitive Complutensian Edition of the New Testament ; in a Letter to Archdeacon Bentley, 1722.*' This is reprinted in the last edition of Lord Somers' Tracts, by Sir Walter Scott, but is erroneously stated to be written by Dr. Middleton.

²⁷ This matter has been decided by Bishop Marsh, who has compared a great number of the readings of the manuscript with those of the edition. See notes on *Michaelis*, vol. iii. p. 818. .

cation was suspended, the cause was universally attributed to the irrecoverable blow experienced from his adversary's publication. This opinion is expressed by numerous writers of the time, and has been commonly received and credited down to the present day. It is, however, one of the vulgar errors, which have attached themselves to Dr. Bentley's history; for though different causes co-operated to prevent the intended publication, it is quite certain that Middleton's pamphlet had no effect upon the undertaking; or, if it had any influence at all, seems rather to have added a stimulus to the editor to persevere with more energy in his task. Whatever reply he designed to make to the censures and cavils of his opponents, was reserved for his *Prolegomena*. It is indeed doubtful whether he ever perused this formidable tract: shortly after its appearance he told Bishop Atterbury, that 'he scorned to read the rascal's book; but if his Lordship would send him any part which he thought the strongest, he would undertake to answer it before night²⁸.' Nor is it true, as currently believed, that the subscription to the work was stopped by this publication; it had already obtained great encouragement; a long and distinguished list of subscribers had been secured, and the sum paid by them in advance, according to the terms of the Proposals, is recorded to have been not less than 2000 guineas²⁹. About the same time he met with a

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Great extent of the subscription.

²⁸ Letter of Middleton to Colbatch, June 9, 1721.

²⁹ The preface to the *Epistolæ Duæ* just mentioned, which was published in 1721, says, "Aliud est denique de quo te monitum velim; nempe has Epistolas, quamvis pluribus abhinc mensibus scriptas, non ante in publicum prodire, quam futurus ille Novi Testamenti editor magnam et amplam satis ad opus suum sustentandum subscribentium (ut vocant) copiam sibi comparasset." Smalbroke also, in his pamphlet just mentioned, alludes to the great number of Bentley's subscribers.

Respecting the subscription, there is an anecdote told by Hearne, in his

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Fails in his
attempt to
import
paper duty-
free.

May 11.

rebuff of another description : deeming his work one in which both Religion and the national credit were interested, he thought it a fit object for the countenance and favour of Government, and therefore applied for permission to import the paper for the publication duty-free. This application, though it met with some support, was rejected by the Board of Treasury. Wetstein states in his *Prolegomena*, that the immediate abandonment of the whole undertaking was the consequence of mortification at this disappointment³⁰. Bentley is said, and no doubt with truth, to have been considerably hurt at the repulse ; but it is a mistake to suppose that he thereupon abandoned his plan, even for a day : almost immediately afterwards we find him borrowing from the Earl of Oxford a valuable Latin manuscript, in capital letters of gold, called *Codex Aureus*, just purchased in Holland, and another ancient copy of

manuscripts, from a person who met Dr. Bentley at the Duke of Bolton's table. "The Doctor happening to be called out of the room, the Duke proposed to the company to subscribe to his New Testament : to which they all agreed, and collected about 100 guineas, which his Grace put into his hands on his return : when Bentley exclaimed, while he shook them,

Quis, nisi mentis inops, oblatum respuit aurum ?"

In this story, the number of guineas must, I apprehend, have been exaggerated.

³⁰ This account is given in Wetstein's *Prolegomena*, p. 156. He appears to have derived his information from the *Bibliothèque Angloise*. See Wolf's Epistle to Lacroze, Sept. 1721, in which he mentions the fact of Bentley's unsuccessful application to obtain paper duty-free ; and remarks upon the disposition shown in England to oppose Bentley's scheme, wondering what he could have done to have drawn upon himself so much hatred. *Thes. Epistol. Lacroz.* tom. ii. p. 167. Colbatch writing to Middleton, May 23, 1721, refers to this anecdote. "I heartily congratulate you upon the universal and highly deserved applause that your last piece meets with every where ; by which, according to all that I can speak with or hear from, you have laid Bentley flat upon his back. Mr. Eachard writes me by last post from London, that he is every where teased and mortified about it ; and that the loss of his paper project puts him beyond all patience."

the Gospels, belonging to the noble collection of the ex-minister³¹. He designed also to go to Oxford at the beginning of the summer, to examine and collate with his own eyes the numerous and important manuscripts of the New Testament in the Bodleian and other libraries of that University; and he was to have been a visitor in the house of the Dean of Christchurch³². But finding it inconvenient to perform this task himself, he committed it to David Casley, his deputy in the King's and Cottonian libraries. That gentleman executed his commission with great diligence; and as neither trouble nor expense was spared for the accuracy of the forthcoming edition, he made new collations of several manuscripts which had been already used by Dr. Mill; and Bentley embodied these, as well as the readings of the ancient copies just noticed, among the materials for his great work.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

David Cas-
ley.

Our hero, however, was now to have his thoughts and attention occupied by matters the most uncongenial to literary and editorial pursuits, a series of angry litigations, which only supplied food to the vindictive passions of all parties concerned. His prosecution of Dr. Middleton for a libel upon himself, his College, and the King's justice, had been going on since the beginning of the last year. The repeated delays of trial led to a general opinion that he would abandon the proceedings: but this was a mistake; for in Trinity Term, 1721, shortly after the

Middleton
found guilty
of a libel.

³¹ Of the loan of these manuscripts to Bentley, a statement, highly amusing for its official solemnity, is given by Humphrey Wanley, the well-known keeper of the Harleian Library, in his Diary printed in *Nichols' Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 88. Bentley in his account of these copies considers each of them to be 1000 years old.

³² At the death of Bishop Smalridge, in 1719, Dr. Hugh Boulter, afterwards Primate of Ireland, succeeded both to the bishoprick of Bristol, and deanery of Christchurch.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

Kept in
long sus-
pense.

appearance of Middleton's last pamphlet, and while Bentley's publisher was threatened with a prosecution, the cause was called on in the Court of King's Bench. The issue of the trial could not be doubtful for a moment. Middleton had formally acknowledged himself to be author of the 'True State of Trinity College;' and the Chief Justice, Sir John Pratt, in his charge to the jury, dwelt upon the passage quoted in our last Chapter, which declared that the Fellows of Trinity had 'not been able to find any proper court in England which would receive their complaints,' as containing an undoubted libel upon the whole administration of justice in the kingdom. Thereupon the jury returned a verdict of 'Guilty,' and Dr. Middleton was ordered to attend at the bar on an early day to receive sentence for the crime of which he was convicted. This was a great and, as it seems, an unexpected blow. The correspondence of Middleton with Colbatch at this time exhibits a lively picture of the uncertainties and anxieties which agitate the mind of a person in his situation. He was kept nearly a month in daily attendance at Westminster Hall, in expectation of judgment, which was constantly put off, as he believed, by the artifices of Bentley, who wished to make the business as vexatious and expensive as possible. Meanwhile a variety of reports kept him in a perpetual fever, sometimes elevated by hope, the next day sunk in despondency at the prospect of a fine beyond his means to pay, which might consign him to the misery of a jail. Before his trial, Middleton had been flattered with assurances that his cause would be considered as the common cause of the whole party, and that they would not allow their champion to suffer for his exertions; but when he was actually in peril, the number of his zealous

friends appeared to dwindle : those who continued to countenance and assist him were only Dr. Colbatch, Dr. Ayloffe, Dr. Dickens the Professor of Civil Law, and Mr. Pilgrim the Professor of Greek. They furnished him with suitable affidavits to be presented to the Court previous to his sentence, and gave him money towards his expenses : Colbatch in particular sent him an order for fifty pounds. He fancied that the leaders of his party, Sherlock and Gooch, showed coldness towards him in his distress ; and did not recollect that his present trouble related to the concerns of a private college, in which members of other societies seldom like to interpose. However, through the good offices of Mr. Dixie Windsor, he was introduced to a private conference with ‘ a certain great personage,’ (whom I apprehend to be the Lord Chancellor) and obtained from him an assurance that he would mollify the Chief Justice, and procure a lenient sentence. Meanwhile the term passed away, and the defendant was left to speculate upon his fate throughout the Long-vacation.

Dr. Colbatch now occupied himself in preparing for the press a pamphlet in Middleton’s favour, entitled ‘ The Case of Richard Bentley against Dr. Middleton considered : and a Question arising thereupon discussed ; viz. how far it may be lawful to publish the notorious Crimes of any Wicked Man.’ This piece, executed with all his ability, repeats, comments upon, and aggravates the charges of the pamphlet for which Middleton had been convicted. But the copy being shown by his bookseller to Mr. Ketelbey, a barrister, he pronounced without hesitation that it would be deemed a libel and subject the author to a prosecution, and that Bentley, ‘ who now knew the way into Westminster Hall,’ would in-

CHAP. fallibly avail himself of such an opportunity for
XV. crushing a dreaded adversary.
1721.

Change of
Ministry.

Act of
Grace.

A revolution had just occurred in the Ministry, in consequence of the explosion of the South-sea Bubble. Some leading members of the Government being involved in the disgrace of that transaction, the Cabinet was broken up, and Lord Townshend and Mr. Walpole resumed their former stations in the councils of the King. Parliament having enacted severe penalties upon the leading managers of that fraudulent scheme, the new Ministry found it expedient to close the session with an Act of Grace, which might relieve the fears of numbers implicated in the transactions of the last year of insane speculation. Mr. Dixie Windsor, meeting the Chancellor while this Bill was in progress, reminded him of Middleton's case, and obtained his Lordship's promise that a clause should be so worded as to include his friend in the general pardon. But the great man forgot his pledge, or neglected to attend to its fulfilment; and the Bill was drawn in precisely the same terms as that of 1717, leaving the Doctor exposed to the terrors of the law for the libel of which he was convicted. Accordingly he had to renew his attendance in the month of November, and was again subject to vexatious and expensive delays, expecting daily to be called up for judgment. In the meantime his counsel and friends earnestly importuned him to compromise the business out of court: at their instance he offered Bentley to pay his costs; but the latter was unwilling to let his adversary out of his clutches, till he had deprived him of further power of annoyance. In pursuing this policy he somewhat over-reached himself; for the defendant, wearied at length of his painful situation,

instructed his counsel to move for judgment upon the verdict. Chief Justice Pratt immediately observed, 'that he had hoped to have heard no more of this affair; but that two Doctors of Divinity, to avoid the scandal justly given by such personal quarrels, would have found some way of making it up between themselves:' and as the Court could not attend to the matter that day, he trusted it would be compromised in such a manner as to save them all further trouble about it. It was then alleged that Bentley was too unreasonable, and was not satisfied with the offer of his costs; but the judges all reminded Middleton of the magnitude of his offence, and the necessity for making some amends by asking pardon. Hereupon his counsel again importuned him to comply with the directions of the Court; and he was prevailed upon to say, that 'as far as he had offended the law by what he had done, he was sorry for it, and asked the Master's pardon.' This, the Chief Justice said, 'was a sufficient satisfaction, and ought to be so considered by Dr. Bentley.' The latter, however, aimed at something more than this qualified apology: and the matter not having been settled, the defendant next day again moved the Court for judgment. The Chief Justice now expressed himself with some severity against Bentley, wondering that he should be so irreconcilable: and when his counsel urged that the defendant 'ought to subscribe a paper acknowledging that he had wronged and abused the whole society,' his Lordship was pleased to be jocular, and asked, 'whether they would not have the paper set up at the Exchange, or have Dr. Middleton led through Westminster Hall, with it pinned upon his hat?' This hint produced an immediate termination of the business: the apology already offered was accepted, and the defendant paid the prosecutor's

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

The Chief
Justice ad-
vises a set-
tlement.

Middleton
begs pardon
of Bentley.

Nov. 24.

Pays the
costs.

CHAP.
XV.
1721.

costs, after they had been taxed by the Master of the Crown Office. The result was considered by Middleton's friends as a sort of triumph, since he was allowed to escape without sentence, after being convicted of what the law regarded as an egregious libel upon Bentley: but it was probably more burthensome to him than a fine; as the amount of expenses to be defrayed, even after they had been taxed, was very considerable. This we may conclude from the fact, that the share of the expenses of prosecution, not allowed by the Master of the Crown Office, and remaining to be defrayed by Trinity College, amounted to no less than 150*l*.

Made Principal Librarian of the University.

The feud, however, was only removed from Westminster Hall to the Academic groves, where it was carried on with renewed activity. Middleton having suffered considerably both from expense and uneasiness, in what his friends termed a public cause, it was resolved by the party to take a measure in his favour, which might at the same time make him ample compensation, and be a public testimony of the high sense entertained by the University of his character and learning. The plan hit upon was to create the new office of *Proto-bibliothecarius*, or Principal Keeper of the University Library, and to confer it upon Dr. Middleton with all honourable distinction, and a salary of fifty pounds. The preamble of the Grace for this measure, states that the increase of the library, by the magnificent donation of the King, required more care than a single librarian could devote; but the immediate object of the appointment is declared in the following terms: *Placeat vobis, ut Reverendus Vir Conyers Middleton, S.T.P. fide, moribus, doctrina spectatissimus, in perpetuum vestræ erga eum benevolentiae testimonium, Proto-bibliothecarii munere primus honestetur.* On the 14th

of December this Grace was proposed to the Senate; and from traditional anecdotes it may be inferred that no measure of that agitated period was supported and opposed with more warmth and animosity. Bentley's party exclaimed against it as a profligate job of their opponents: and some independent persons considered that, as the duties and responsibility of the old librarian were to remain the same as before, this new office, designed for persons of higher rank, would, probably, after its temporary purpose had been answered, become a sinecure for one of the Heads. But the question became almost entirely a conflict of party, and on a division it was carried in favour of the appointment by a majority of 112 against 49³³.

³³ So great were the heats on this occasion, that Dr. Symonds, a Fellow of St. John's College, used to relate, that he and another person being the only members of that College who voted against Middleton's appointment, the indignation against them was so great that they were hooted the whole way back from the Schools to St. John's.

Dr. Middleton, about eleven years afterwards, in his speech before the University, on first becoming Woodwardian Professor, alluded to the success of this day, with great satisfaction: "Vos etenim, cum certorum hominum invidia indigne olim vexarer, novum in hac Academia Proto-Bibliothecarii munus eodem decreto instituistis, et ad me detulistis: publico illo iudicii vestri testimonio significantes, et quid de me judicaretis, et quid aliis etiam iudicandum præscriberetis."—*Middleton's Works*, vol. i. p. 399.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ancient Sigeon Inscription, published by Chishull—Bentley's letter to Dr. Mead on this Inscription—Bentley's restoration of an old Delian Inscription—Alexander Cunningham's censure of Bentley's Horace—Cunningham labours to destroy Bentley's credit—Validity of his strictures examined—Comparison of Bentley and Cunningham—Thirlby's Justin Martyr—Cotes's Harmonia—Markland's Epistola Critica—Wasse—Bentley's revision of Nicander—Attack on Bentley in the Spy—Lord Orrery—Verses by Dr. Bentley—Colbatch pursues the prosecution of Bentley for a libel—Bentley cited to give evidence in the Vice-chancellor's Court—Is absent on the King's service—A Rule from the Court of King's Bench to stop the proceedings of the University—Colbatch writes Jus Academicum—The proceedings against Bentley dropped—Bentley prosecutes Colbatch's publication—Interest in Colbatch's favour with the Ministers—Lord Chancellor Macclesfield—Chief Justice Pratt—The publisher committed—Colbatch solicits the King's Pardon—Lord Carteret—Bentley applies to the Court of King's Bench to procure his restoration to his degrees—University employs Sir Philip Yorke as counsel—Colbatch's case—Favour promised him by Lord Townshend—Prevented by the Lord Chancellor—He is committed—Sentence by Mr. Justice Powis—Middleton's tract, 'Bibliothecæ Cantabrigiæ Ordinandæ Methodus'—Prosecuted by Bentley for a reflection on the Judges—Middleton fined 50l.—Bentley's cause against the University—The Judges deliver their opinions against the University—The Senate still keeps up the contest—Peremptory mandamus to restore Bentley's degrees.

CHAP.
XVI.
1721.

Ancient
Sigeon in-
scription
published
by Chishull.

BEFORE we pursue the detail of the judicial struggles which took place between Dr. Bentley and his various adversaries at this remarkable period of his life, it will be convenient to notice some matters which afforded much interest to the literary commonwealth. In 1721 Mr. Edmund Chishull, an antiquarian of considerable learning and industry, published a very ancient Greek inscription from a large marble found at Sigeum, accompanied with an able commentary. There are several circumstances which still continue

to give to this monument of former times an extraordinary degree of interest. In the first place, both the forms and order of the letters run in the alternate lines from left to right and from right to left. This mode of writing, termed *Boustrophedon* from its resemblance to the track of oxen ploughing the earth, is that said to have been used by Solon in the public copy of his Laws at Athens; specimens of it have been preserved to our time, in a few old inscriptions. The characters, which are rude capitals, bear a considerable resemblance to those of Phœnicia, the country from whence it is recorded that the use of letters was first imported into Greece. The aspirate H is still preserved as a distinct character, and in the very same form which it bore when the Æolic dialect of the Greek was carried to Italy, where it became one of the parents of the Latin language. The terminations of the genitive cases in O instead of OY presented another characteristic of that ancient dialect; and the characters E and O expressing those vowels in their long as well as short quantity, proved that the use of the four letters of Simonides had not yet been introduced. These and other circumstances rendered it probable that this inscription was written as far back as the age of Solon and Periander; and, at all events, that it was not later than 500 years before the Christian æra. Nor was the antiquity of the writing the only circumstance of interest: the masonry of the stone seemed referable to the heroic ages, and the spot most hallowed by immortal verse: for history records that the city of Sigeum was built by a colony from Mitylene, out of the materials of ancient Troy; and this marble being nine feet in height, might be fancied to have once held the place of a portal in the palace of King Priam, or the Temple of Minerva. As for the matter of the superscription, it was as trivial

CHAP.
XVI.
1721.

as can be imagined. One Phanodicus had presented to the city a bowl, a stand, and a strainer, for the use of the Prytaneum or Common Hall : and the grateful Sigeans commemorated his munificence by a statue, (probably one of the description called *Hermæ*,) of which the stone bearing this inscription appears to have been the base. The enormous magnitude of the mass, and size of the letters preserving this monument through all the revolutions of empire and of ages, it has happened that the good citizens have conferred upon their benefactor a more durable fame than they could themselves have contemplated, or his liberality deserved. Two copies of the inscription having been transmitted to England, one made by a Turkish dragoman, and the other by Dr. Samuel Lisle (afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph and of Norwich), who had succeeded Chishull as chaplain to the English Factory at Smyrna, the editor was induced by the urgent persuasion of his friend Dr. Mead, to publish this precious specimen of antique writing, with proper illustrations.

Bentley's
letter to Dr.
Mead on
this inscrip-
tion.

Dr. Bentley happening to be in town when this volume appeared, it was immediately put into his hands by that great physician and Mæcenas, with whom he lived in habits of daily intercourse. The first inspection led him to pronounce an opinion respecting the inscription different from that of Chishull. He took the book home with him, read it through before he went to bed, and next day sent to Dr. Mead a long epistle explaining and defending his notions of this venerable monument. It is necessary to mention that the stone contains two inscriptions, one of which is only an abridgment of the other, and from its containing the two long vowels η and ω , which were not original Cadmean letters, seems to have been engraved at a more recent period : the

longer of the two mentions 'Æsopus and his brothers' as the workmen. Upon such data Bentley founded an hypothesis, that these were really nothing more than copies of inscriptions engraved on two of the three vessels given by Phanodicus; that there had been no such thing as a statue of the donor; and that Æsopus and his two brethren were not statuaries, but manufacturers of the three vessels which ministered to the conviviality of the Sigeans. It is probable that no one capable of forming a judgment on such subjects, has ever acceded to this notion of Bentley's: at the same time no candid person can read his letter to Dr. Mead, without acknowledging that the theory is highly ingenious and ably defended. But it was written on the spur of the moment, without reference to books, to show how well he could maintain a suddenly-conceived hypothesis. It was highly imprudent thus to expose the reputation which he had achieved, by the maintenance of a paradox under every possible disadvantage: but this is not the only instance in Bentley's life, in which he sacrificed much of his solid fame to the transient vanity of displaying his ready talent and extemporary learning. He did, indeed, deprecate controversy under such circumstances, saying in conclusion, "I have writ too much for an extempore remark, and too little for an accurate discussion, if I was amongst my books. If you show it to Mr. Chishull, pray let it go no further; nor bring me into a public dispute. I'll dispute with nobody about nothing; much less about this with a person for whose great learning I have so just respect, and whose labours in hand I wish so well to." An epistle, however, from the prince of critics, upon a topic of such interest to all classical antiquaries, was not likely to pass into oblivion. Chishull so far adhered to the condition prescribed, that he did not publish

CHAP.
XVI.
1721.

CHAP.
XVI.
1721.

Bentley's own words ; but while he 'kept the word of promise to the ear, he broke it to the hope ;' for he printed an Appendix to his Dissertation, wherein he stated and refuted the critic's objections, without naming him, but designating him in terms which left no doubt as to the person intended : this was done in an elaborate manner, and not without occasional asperity. He probably could not resist the temptation of exhibiting a decided advantage over the great Aristarchus ; and was moreover nettled at the terms in which Bentley had spoken of the weakest point of his Dissertation, a conjecture that *Æsop* the statuary of the Sigeans was no other than *Æsop* the fabulist ; the absurdity of which notion he had exposed, though less severely than it deserved. The effect of this Appendix has been, that every subsequent author who speaks of the Sigeian Inscription (and I scarcely recollect any writer upon Greek Palæography who has not mentioned it) refers to Bentley's extemporary criticism, and generally in terms of censure, without being aware of the circumstances under which it was promulgated ; and the result must be confessed to have been injurious to his reputation¹. As a countervailing merit, however, Bentley, at the conclusion of this letter to Dr. Mead, gave an acute and happy restoration and explanation of a certain old inscription on the base of a colossal statue of Apollo at Delos, which Tournefort, the celebrated French botanist, had copied during his travels in the Levant.

Bentley's
restoration
of an old
Delian in-
scription.

¹ This *Appendicula* appears to have been in the first instance attached by Chishull to the unsold copies of his work, and was afterwards reprinted in an edition of it at Leyden in 1727, as well as in his larger work of *Antiquitates Asiaticæ*. It contained besides, a reply of the editor to some objections of Michael Maittaire ; also another inscription from a marble found at Sigeum, which was purchased by Mr. Edward Wortley Montague, the ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, and now graces the vestibule of Trinity Library.

This Inscription, consisting of a single iambic line, in old characters, similar to those of the Sigeian marble, had been unsuccessfully attempted by Hardouin and Montfaucon, two of the most learned men that France ever produced, as well as by Chishull himself. This was a great triumph of his sagacity, and is particularly to be noticed, because Richard Dawes, his envious imitator, has endeavoured to appropriate to himself the credit of what is really due to Bentley².

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

At the commencement of 1722 was published a very severe and able censure of the Doctor's edition of Horace, by Mr. Alexander Cunningham, a Scotch gentleman, printed at the Hague, which had long been the place of his residence. Before we proceed to describe this performance, we must bestow a few words upon its author; who has, owing to the numerous points of coincidence with his namesake, the author of a History of Great Britain in Latin, acquired the character of a mysterious personage. Between Alexander Cunningham the historian, and Alexander Cunningham the editor of Horace, there are so many particulars of resemblance, that Thomson, the translator of the History, was forced, after a minute inquiry, to remain in suspense whether or not they were the same individual. It appears that they were both Scotchmen, had both been travelling tutors, both resided at the Hague at the same period, both were intimate with certain distinguished public characters, both were eminent chess-players, both accomplished scholars, and both lived to an advanced age. These and many other coincidences long baffled all inquiry respecting the identity or diversity of the

² See Dawes' *Miscellanea Critica*, p. 132; and his Letter to Dr. Taylor, p. 18* of Mr. Kidd's Appendix to his edition of that work.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

two namesakes : and it has, I believe, but recently been ascertained beyond a doubt, that the critic died at the Hague in 1730, and the historian died in London in 1737. This instance of ambiguity may serve as a caution to biographers and antiquaries, who are sometimes led by much slighter circumstances than those just mentioned, to assign to one person the actions or writings of another. The present difficulty is the more worthy of remark, because neither of the Cunninghams was an obscure author ; they both lived in the world, enjoying considerable reputation during their life-time ; and one of them filled diplomatic stations in the service of his country.

Cunning-
ham labours
to destroy
Bentley's
credit.

The writer who has secured to himself a literary immortality as one of the most powerful of Dr. Bentley's antagonists, has already been mentioned to the reader as the intimate friend of Le Clerc at the time of the celebrated exposure of his Menander : I know not whether a regard for that unfortunate editor might have prompted the idea of revenging his friend's disaster by an elaborate censure of our critic's Horace : it certainly may be inferred from Cunningham's own account, that he had been occupied ever since the publication of Bentley's edition, a period of ten years, in preparing materials for refuting his emendations and overturning his credit. The only cause assigned by himself for such industrious hostility, was his wish to chastise the arrogance and presumption displayed in that performance. However this might be, it must be confessed that he has deserved the title of ' the fairest of critics,' in the sense in which it has been bestowed upon Milbourne, the adversary of Dryden, who put forth, along with his criticism of the latter's Virgil, a translation of part of that poet by his own hand, ' that Mr. Dryden

might be satisfied that he offered him no foul play, nor found faults in him without giving him an opportunity of retaliation.' In like manner, Mr. Cunningham published at the same time two distinct works—a volume of *Animadversions* on Bentley's *Horace*, and a volume containing the text of the poet, corrected according to his own judgment. To the latter he intended to have added a body of notes, to which he frequently refers, and which were to have comprised a defence of his own readings, and a refutation of his antagonist's; but those notes never appeared. The *Animadversions* are divided into 19 chapters, occupying nearly 400 pages, and addressed personally to Dr. Bentley. This book is one continued objurgation, delivered in dry and bitter terms, unvaried by the least humour or playfulness: it is the effusion of a person who feels an advantage in the contest, and thinks that his own superior industry and research have given him a right to scold and insult his adversary without forbearance. The general topics of reproach are, the boastfulness of Bentley's language, his assuming to himself the credit of readings which were already to be found in some edition or some commentary, and his want of skill in the application of certain critical rules, which Cunningham persuaded himself to be infallible in the discovery of true readings. I have already explained without reserve the principal faults of Bentley's edition, and shown how they arose in part from the manner in which it had been begun and completed. A large portion of his notes, perhaps the majority, having been despatched in haste, it was plainly impossible that he should have consulted every one of the innumerable editions of the poet, for the reading in each line; a task which his present adversary, who is recorded to have possessed an

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Validity of
his stric-
tures exa-
mined.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

excellent library, undisturbed leisure, and diligence which was never tired, was enabled to accomplish.

This part of his work is the most successful in the object at which he laboured, the infliction of a wound upon our critic's reputation. But the fact, when fairly stated, does not bear out the charge either of plagiarism or carelessness, which this adversary took such unexampled pains to establish. Cunningham's eighth chapter enumerates no less than 109 passages in the editions of Ascensius, 66 in that of Baxter, and 138 in other printed copies, all of which give the reading as it stands in Bentley's; who, however, assumes credit for its restoration, without mentioning that the same had been done before him. But this formidable collection of passages, while it proves the industry and ill-nature of Cunningham, fails in establishing his accusation; for it will be seen by examination, that Bentley generally alleges as his authority the reading of some manuscript or a citation by some old writer, and does not assert that *no one edition* had adopted it, but speaks of *pleræque editiones* or *omnes fere editiones* as giving the common reading. He did not pretend to have examined *every* preceding edition with minute care: some copies it is pretty clear that he had never seen: and in no instance, that I have observed, does this rigid examiner make out against our critic a case of intentional dishonesty or unfairness.

Comparison
of Bentley
and Cun-
ningham.

As Cunningham challenges a comparison between his text of Horace, and that of Bentley, undertaking that his own shall be found more correct than his adversary's in 400 passages, it is almost unavoidable to take some notice of the relative merits of the two editors. In the first place we must mention that Cunningham adopts a great proportion of Bentley's readings, being convinced of their truth; though he

can scarcely ever prevail upon himself to allow him the least credit. Secondly, his annotations, though displaying wonderful industry and accuracy, do not approach to those of Bentley in learning, ingenuity, or interest; while they offend in the very particulars for which he chiefly blames his adversary, verbosity and prolixity³. The reader who compares any passages of equal length in the two critics, will be struck with the superior clearness and elegance, as well as the greater quantity of matter comprised in that of Bentley. His antagonist reproaches him in severe terms for not following general rules of criticism in correcting the text of his author; and himself lays down numerous rules, exhibiting their results in his own emendations. It appears, however, that many of them incur the very faults charged against those of Bentley: the same occasional harshness, the same disposition to refine and make nice distinctions in Horace's phrases, and thus to degrade poetry into prose, which we have noticed in our editor, may be found in his adversary. At the same time his language is as confident and dogmatical as that of any commentator whom I can recollect. With respect to the critical rules propounded and followed with so much diligence, it is sufficient to observe, that they will be found useful to the scholar who reads and considers them, even when he does not altogether approve their application. I am of opinion, indeed, that subsequent editors have not sufficiently availed themselves of the labours of Cunningham in establishing the text of Horace.

The volume of *Animadversions* is dedicated to Dr.

³ " Illud unum hic contra tuum scribendi morem adnotare, quamquam plura possum, placet, in notis nihil odiosius esse verbosa longitudo."—*Cuninghamii Animadversiones*, p. 10.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Bentley, for whose use and amendment it professes to be written : its motto is

*"Laudis amore tumes ? sunt certa piacula, quæ te
Ter pure lecto poterunt recreare libello."*

To the volume of text is prefixed a frontispiece representing a crowd of critics introduced into the temple of Truth, each of whom takes off a mask, when the apparition of the goddess presents to them a mirror which she bears upon her shield ; and they all start with horror at viewing the deformity of their own features. In this company the prominent figure is intended for Dr. Bentley, and the reflection in the mirror bears a considerable resemblance to his countenance⁴.

Had this attack been made some years earlier, it is probable that Bentley would have accepted the challenge thrown out by Cunningham, and a controversy between them could not have failed to elicit much that would have been interesting to scholars. Coming as it did at the moment when his time and attention were absorbed by the various struggles in which he was engaged, he thought proper to leave his adversary in possession of the field, and securely trusted to posterity the part of deciding between their respective

⁴ At the bottom of this frontispiece are the following words, adapted from Horace :

*"Detrahit et pellem nitidus qua quisque per ora
Ambulat, introrsum turpis."*

The title of the volume is Q. HORATII FLACCI POEMAT. *Ex antiquis Codd. et certis Observationibus emendavit, variasque Scriptorum et Impressorum lectiones adjecit* ALEXANDER CUNINGAMIUS. *Hagæ Comitum, apud Thomam Jonsonium, 1721.* There are other title pages both of this publication and of the *Animadversiones*, assuming to be published at London. The preface to the *Animadversiones* is dated 4 Cal. Dec. 1721. That of the text *ipsis Idibus Decembris, 1721.*

merits. As more than a century has since elapsed, we may now consider that this judgment has been pronounced, and that the reputation of Bentley has unequivocally triumphed : he is read and admired by hundreds to whom the lucubrations of his rival are unknown ; and Cunningham, like some others of his opponents, owes the preservation of his name to the transcendant reputation of him whom he laboured so industriously to disparage.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

A few months afterwards, the great subject of these memoirs was assailed by another attack, which surpassed all the preceding in gall and malignity : this was from Styán Thirlby, whose edition of Justin Martyr was published by subscription in the summer of 1722. We have already recorded his early antipathy against our hero, which displayed itself at a period when he could not have had any offence to complain of, and when his existence was probably unknown to Dr. Bentley. It is impossible to explain all the impulses which may operate upon so extravagant and capricious a character : but on this occasion his wrath had been excited by hearing that the Master of Trinity had spoken slightly of him and his projected edition. In revenge he abused him with immoderate rancour in his preface and dedication to William Earl of Craven ; telling the latter that, when he met the offender in his company, he was withheld only by respect for his Lordship from taking vengeance of another description. So violently had resentment got possession of him, that he gives the full reins to invective, and rails against classical studies and Bentley, in so extravagant a style that he makes the reader, at the very outset of his work, doubt whether the editor was in a sane mind. Dr. Ashton, the Master of Thirlby's College, who had been his patron, and was unfavourably disposed to the Master of Trinity,

Thirlby's
Justin
Martyr.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

spoke of this performance in a letter to Dr. Moss, the Dean of Ely, in the following terms: "I have not had patience to read all his dedication, but have seen enough to observe that it is stuffed with self-conceit, and an insolent contempt of others; Bentley especially, whom he again points at in page 18. I have read about 60 pages of his performance, and am really ashamed to find so much self-sufficiency⁵." Of Thirlby no more need here be said. Had it been the fortune of that desultory genius to enjoy the intimacy of the illustrious biographer of Savage, it is probable that his story might have supplied incidents as curious, and moral reflections as important, as that of the highly-gifted and profligate poet⁶.

Cotes's Har-
monia.

As a set-off against the tirades just mentioned, it is fair to record the treatment which Dr. Bentley received about the same time from persons whose names hold a still higher station than those of his censurers. Robert Smith, the Professor of Astronomy, published in 1722 *Harmonia Mensurarum*, the posthumous work of his accomplished relative and predecessor, Cotes: his preface speaks of Bentley, as the encourager of science, in the most handsome terms imaginable; and with reference to his pecuniary liberality and activity in promoting subscriptions, first for the observatory and afterwards for astronomical instruments, he gives him the title of a 'second founder.'

In the following year Jeremiah Markland first appeared before the public as a classical critic; a character which he sustained with distinction for more

⁵ Cole's MSS. vol. xxx. p. 116. The letter is printed by Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 269.

⁶ Mr. Nichols (*Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 264—271) gives some Memoirs of Styan Thirlby, about one half of which were taken from the hints and suggestions of Dr. Sam. Johnson. See also *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 551.

than fifty years. His first essay was an *Epistola Critica* addressed to Dr. Hare, the Dean of Worcester, principally relating to passages of Horace which he proposed to correct. The opening sentence contains a handsome tribute to the merits of Dr. Bentley, who is mentioned in all parts of the book with becoming praise. Markland, throughout his long career, uniformly showed his admiration of our great critic; which was founded upon an intimate acquaintance with his intuitive genius, and with the intrinsic and unrivalled excellence of his writings. I am particular in noticing this fact, for two reasons: first, the opinion of Markland is of great importance in awarding literary credit, not only on account of his learning, but of his candid disposition and unprejudiced judgment; secondly, because our mention of him in connection with the party by whom Bentley was deprived of his degrees, might have led to a notion that he was also included among his literary adversaries⁷.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.
Markland's
Epistola
Critica.

A classical miscellany was instituted in 1722, and Wasse. published periodically for two years, called *Bibliotheca Literaria*; comprising the contributions of several scholars. The editor was Dr. Samuel Jebb; the principal writer Mr. Joseph Wasse, late Fellow of Queen's College, the well-known commentator on Sallust and Thucydides: of him Bentley is recorded to have said, "When I am dead, Wasse will be the most learned man in England⁸." This publication affords

⁷ Nichols, in his full and interesting account of Markland (*Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 275) mentions 'a rude message being sent to him by Bentley,' relative to a projected edition of Apuleius. Whatever be the authority for this story, Markland never testified any offence against Bentley.

⁸ This is on the authority of Whiston. Wasse died nearly four years before Bentley. Had he, however, survived him, Markland, Taylor, Dawes, and perhaps other scholars, might have disputed the truth of the prediction.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

another proof of the homage paid by all rising scholars to the established fame of our great Aristarchus.

In No. vi. are two copies of verses, one Greek the other Latin, written by Wasse in praise of Bentley and his Horace. All that can be said in their favour is, that they are better than the generality of laudatory verses prefixed to books. The Latin copy contains some tolerable lines ; it testifies the anxiety felt by scholars that Bentley would no longer delay the publication of those works which he was known to have been some time meditating, and which his advancing years rendered it unsafe to postpone⁹.

Bentley's
revision of
Nicander.

When the long vacation of 1722 afforded an intermission to the agitating business of the year, Dr. Bentley found leisure to make a complete revision of the *Theriaca* of Nicander, at the instance of Dr. Mead, the only friend who, in the latter part of his life, possessed any material influence over him. Nicander, an old Greek physician of Colophon, in the time of Attalus, had, like our countrymen Garth and Armstrong, composed didactic poems on subjects connected with the medical art ; two of which, the *Theriaca* and *Alexipharmaca*, are preserved. Dr. Mead having put into Bentley's hands an edition of the former by Gorræus, (who translated it into

⁹ In the following lines it is hardly possible not to suspect the writer of a waggish allusion to the 'slashing' propensities of our critic:

" *Quare age, Romane vindex celeberrime linguae,
Ure, seca, telis parcere parce tuis :
Falce preme Plautique sales, castique Terentii
Seria, barbaricas heu male passa manus.
Respice Lucanum, Graiis si forte negaris,
Da causam laudi materiemque tuæ.*

It may be mentioned that Hearne records in his MSS. that he fell into company with Wasse in 1722, when he spoke in praise of Bentley in relation to his undertaking of the New Testament, as well as in every other particular.

Latin verse,) our critic went through the whole with great care, writing his emendations on the margin ; he then returned it to his illustrious friend, prefixing an elegant Latin epistle. This volume in the course of time found its way into the British Museum ; but the offspring of Bentley's learning continued buried and unknown till the year 1814, when, by permission of the Trustees, I copied the emendations and the letter, and printed the whole in the *Museum Criticum*, Nos. iii. and iv. along with the text of Gorræus's edition. Though the corrections are not defended by any notes, yet the scholar who inspects them will not fail to recognize the truth of an observation, more than once hinted in this history, that Bentley is more to be depended upon as a corrector of Greek than of Latin authors : the spirit of violent and harsh alteration, which continually shows itself in his revision of the latter, did not accompany him when employed upon books in the former language.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

The pens of light and ephemeral writers, who swarm like summer flies in the fields of literature, continued to make our great critic the object of their puny attacks and worthless panegyrics. 'The Spy,' a weekly literary paper, which lasted but for a few numbers, in 1721 endeavoured to draw attention by an article against him, principally on the score of his New Testament. A pamphlet immediately appeared in his defence, avowedly written by a friend of Dr. Bentley, who was however almost as feeble as his adversary¹⁰. The Spy, who was some scribbler writing for bread in a garret, had converted to his own purposes, without acknowledgment, many whole

Attack on
Bentley in
the Spy.

¹⁰ *The Apothecary's Defence of Dr. Bentley, in Answer to the Spy. Together with some Observations, Moral and Critical, upon the Fable of the Jackdaw in Peacock's Feathers, particularly addressed to the Author of the Spy.* London, 1721.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Lord Orrery.

sentences from Boyle's book in the Phalaris controversy : and the 'Defence' exposes the thefts of this pillager. But neither piece would have any claim upon our readers' notice, were it not for a single sentence in the latter, which professes to express the sentiments entertained by Dr. Bentley, after the lapse of many years, towards Mr. C. Boyle, now Lord Orrery, the object of his former severity. "Let me now tell it the Spy as a secret, that Dr. Bentley has the greatest deference for his noble antagonist, both as a person of eminent parts and quality : and I dare say his noble antagonist thinks of Dr. Bentley as of a person as great in critical learning, as England has boasted of for many a century." We may here add, what is stated on good authority, that Lord Orrery visited the Master of Trinity at his lodge¹¹.

Verses by
Dr. Bentley.

About this time Bentley committed to paper a copy of English verses : a sort of composition to which he was adapted neither by nature nor habit ; but the reputation of the author, and singularity of the production, styled by Dr. S. Johnson 'the only English verses that he is known to have written,' have transmitted them to posterity. They were occasioned by an imitation of Horace's Ode (iii. 2.) *Angustam, amici, pauperiem pati*—by Walter Titley, a student of Trinity : this, which was probably a College exercise, so much pleased the Master, that he chose to devote a leisure hour to writing a parody of Titley's stanzas. The lines have been much admired, and the great critic just mentioned pronounced them the 'forcible verses of a man of strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse¹².' In truth, they rather aspire to the praise of eloquence than poetry ; but they claim, at all events, a place in the account of Bentley's life, since, whoever

¹¹ Dr. Salter, note on *Dissert. on Phalaris*, ed. 1777, p. 309.

¹² *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. iv. p. 24.

reads them, must perceive that 'our hero' had in his
 eye his own fortune, and intended to pourtray his own
 character and career. Titley's lines must first be laid
 before the reader :

CHAP.
 XVI.
 1722.

IMITATION OF HORACE, BOOK III. ODE II.

He who would great in science grow,
 By whom bright Virtue is adored,
 At first must be content to know
 An humble roof and homely board.

With want and rigid College laws
 Let him inur'd betimes comply,
 Firm to Religion's sacred cause,
 The learned combat let him try :

Let him her envied praises tell,
 And all his eloquence disclose,
 The fierce endeavours to repel,
 To still the tumult of her foes.

Him, early form'd, and season'd young,
 Subtle opposers soon will fear,
 And tremble at his artful tongue,
 Like Parthians at a Roman spear.

Grim death, th' inevitable lot,
 Which fools and cowards strive to fly,
 Is with a noble pleasure sought,
 By him who dares for truth to die.

With purest lustre of her own,
 Exalted Virtue ever shines ;
 Nor, as the vulgar smile or frown,
 Advances now, and now declines.

A glorious and immortal prize
 She on her hardy son bestows ;
 She shows him heav'n, and bids him rise,
 Tho' toil, and pain, and death oppose.
 With lab'ring flight he wings the obstructed way,
 Leaving both common souls and common clay.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

BENTLEY'S PARODY.

Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,
And thence poetic laurels bring,
Must first acquire due force and skill,
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

Who Nature's treasures would explore,
Her mysteries and arcana know,
Must high, as lofty Newton, soar,
Must stoop, as delving Woodward, low.

Who studies ancient laws and rites,
Tongues, arts, and arms, all history,
Must drudge, like Selden, day and night,
And in the endless labour die.

Who travels in religious jars,
Truth mix'd with error, shade with rays,
Like Whiston, wanting pyx, and stars,
In ocean wide or sinks, or strays.

But grant our hero's hope, long toil
And comprehensive genius crown,
All sciences, all arts his spoil,
Yet what reward, or what renown?

Envy, innate in vulgar souls,
Envy steps in and stops his rise;
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls
His lustre, and his worth decries.

He lives inglorious or in want,
To college and old books confined;
Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant,
Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind:
Yet left content, a genuine stoic he,
Great without patron, rich without South-sea¹³.

¹³ These lines are in the *Grove*, a miscellany, and in *Dodsley's Collection*: also in *Gent. Mag.* 1740. p. 616.

At the end of the last chapter, we left the feud between Bentley and his academical enemies raging with full vigour. Colbatch continued his determination to procure redress for the late libel upon his character; but the delays of the Vice-chancellor protracted the action against the publisher till the Act of Grace had made it impossible to pursue a criminal process in that or any other court in the kingdom. Nevertheless Colbatch conceived that a mode of proceeding still remained, which was not affected by the general pardon: this was, to prosecute an inquiry into the authorship of the libel, 'in the office of judge:' an investigation which the civil law admits in some cases, and which, as he imagined, would allow of Bentley's being himself examined as an evidence; whereby he might be compelled to make a public confession of an act which had already incurred the severest censure from the Heads of the University. He had some months before propounded his ideas on this subject to his friend Dr. Sayer, and had received a long letter from him, explaining the reasons which made him consider such a proceeding inadmissible in a case of defamation, although allowable in certain other instances. But this opinion could not deter him from his object: he was possessed of considerable acquaintance with the civil law, and having applied his mind with much diligence to the bearings of this case, he persuaded himself that he could see distinctions, which made the exceptions of his friend the civilian inapplicable. Accordingly, the very day on which Middleton stood before the King's Bench to answer for his libel upon the Master of Trinity, Colbatch appeared in the Vice-chancellor's court to prosecute the latter personage for a libel upon himself. He produced the censure of the Heads upon

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Colbatch
pursues the
prosecution
of Bentley
for a libel.

Nov. 24,
1721.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Bentley
cited to give
evidence in
the Vice-
chancel-
lor's Court.

the second edition of ' Dr. Bentley's Proposals ;' which, being read by the Registrary, he implored the *Judicis Officium*, and begged that right and justice might be done him agreeably to the decree. Dr. Crosse, who had been re-elected for a second year with scarcely any opposition, granted the petition, and appointed Cook, Dr. Colbatch's proctor, to be ' promoter of his office,' or prosecutor. The business of the day passed off with only some impertinent interruption from Lisle, who thought that this process was intended as a continuation of the former action. The Vice-chancellor going immediately afterwards to keep residence on his stall at Norwich, constituted Dr. Gooch his deputy, from whom was expected a renewal of vigorous proceedings against the Master of Trinity. Accordingly Colbatch applied to him to grant a citation for Bentley to appear in Court, and give evidence respecting his knowledge of the libel in question : it being thought better to take this step at once ; since, in case he confessed it, all further investigation might be spared. There was no difficulty in obtaining the citation, but a great one in getting it served upon the Master : the Esquire-beadles remembered the circumstances of the arrest of the great delinquent three years before, and were all as averse to such perilous service, as the mice in the fable were to undertake the office of belling the cat. At length one of those gentlemen, Mr. Attwood, was induced by the authority of Dr. Gooch, and a double fee, to execute this function ; and was agreeably surprised at finding himself civilly received by Bentley, who intimated no intention of non-compliance, but only enquired ' whether the summons related to Colbatch's business.' In the meantime the annual audit of Trinity College brought these two enemies into personal collision of a more

angry character, if possible, than heretofore : the expenditure of large sums of money for new works at the lodge, and other schemes of the Master, none of which had been ordered by the Seniority, and the accounts of which they were not suffered to examine, called for Colbatch's severe remonstrances : Bentley replied by violent and abusive language, the result of long-cherished resentment, which the occurrences of each successive day served to irritate and inflame.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

The court to which Bentley was cited was fixed for Jan. 17; but his measures were taken in a way which soon showed that his dexterity was more than a match for the resolution and perseverance of his adversary. He went to town, and learned that, in the opinion of lawyers, the proceedings of the University were illegal, as partaking of the nature of a general inquisition, and might perhaps be resisted by application to the King's Bench. That court, however, did not sit till after the time fixed for his appearance ; and he well knew that the summary proceedings of the academical judge would not wait his convenience. Accordingly he negotiated with one of his brother-chaplains an exchange of the turn of attendance at St. James's, for the month of January. When the Vice-chancellor's Court assembled, ' Richard Bentley, Master of Trinity College,' was three times summoned by name : he not appearing, Proctor Cooke moved for a compulsory writ ; but Dr. Crosse, who presided, declared that he would wait for his appearance till three o'clock. Lisle then came forward and said, that he could save the court that trouble ; as he held in his hand a letter from Dr. Bentley, who was in London, enclosing one from the Duke of Newcastle, the Lord Chamberlain, commanding his attendance on his Majesty's service. The Vice-chancellor immediately

1722.

Jan. 17.

Is absent in
the King's
service.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

diately allowed the excuse to be just and sufficient, adjourned the proceedings to the 16th of February, and admitted the appointment of Lisle as proctor for the Master of Trinity. But his timidity suffered him to be brow-beaten by the insolence of this man; who insisted on the name of his client being entered in the proceedings of the court as '*Doctor Bentley*;' and when told by the Vice-chancellor that it was contrary to his duty and his oath to acknowledge a title which the University had taken away, Lisle declared his belief that Dr. Bentley was still entitled to that dignity, said that the Lord Chamberlain had so styled him, and that he would not give up the honour and dignity of his friend for any one. Such was his sauciness, that the by-standers remarked, that 'had Dr. Gooch presided, he would probably have been laid by the heels.'

February.
A Rule
from the
Court of
King's
Bench to
stop the
proceedings
of the Uni-
versity.

Before the day appointed, Bentley's counsel moved the Court of King's Bench to prohibit the proceedings of the Vice-chancellor, alleging two objections against them: first, that the offence of the pretended libel had been pardoned in the late Act of grace or indemnity; secondly, that the enquiry was illegal, inasmuch as it was designed to examine the supposed offender by interrogatories which he could not answer without criminating himself. The Court immediately granted a Rule for the Vice-chancellor to show cause, on the second day of the following term, why a prohibition should not issue: and he was enjoined to stay all proceedings during the interval.

The Rule of Court being served upon the Vice-chancellor's deputy, produced great sensation in the University. While one party complained of this interference as a breach of academical privilege, their opponents triumphed at the check given to what they

considered arbitrary and violent proceedings¹⁴. But the only individual in the place who seemed to understand the bearings of the question was Dr. Colbatch, with whom this process had originated. His conduct in bringing the University into such a dilemma, by a reliance upon his own legal reading when opposed to professional advice, was rash and headstrong: nor does the object which he was pursuing appear to have been adequate; since, even supposing him completely successful, he could only have obtained a censure of his libeller, by the same authority which had already censured the libel; while his own character would have received no additional vindication. His exertions however in the present exigency show great energy and ability: he wrote statements of the case to inform and encourage the leaders of his party; and drew up an elaborate pamphlet, called *Jus Academicum*, which was printed and circulated, before the ensuing law term, among the judges and advocates¹⁵. In this book the case is ably treated; and it was likely to convey to unlearned readers the same conviction that possessed the mind of the writer. His

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Colbatch
writes *Jus*
Academicum.

¹⁴ There appeared immediately two pamphlets, written by young men of the University, the first in the character of a friend of Bentley, and called *Animadversions on the University's Proceedings against the most learned R. Bentley, D.D. By Phileleutherus Cantabrigiensis*. The Reply, entitled, *A Vindication of the University of Cambridge, in Answer, &c.* Both these pieces are entirely worthless; the writers having but an imperfect and confused notion of the transactions which they were discussing.

¹⁵ The title of this tract, which, according to the fashion of that day, serves as a table of contents, is as follows: "JUS ACADEMICUM; or, a Defence of the peculiar Jurisdiction which belongs of common right to UNIVERSITIES in general, and hath been granted by Royal Charters, confirmed in Parliament, to those of ENGLAND in particular. Shewing, that no Prohibition can lie against their Courts of Judicature, nor appeal from them, in any Cause like that which is now depending before the Vice-chancellor of Cambridge. With a Full Account and Vindication of the Proceedings in that Cause. By a Person concerned. London. Printed for R. Wilkin, at the King's Head, in St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCLXXII."

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

account of the peculiar jurisdiction belonging to Universities, both in England and the Continent, is clear and satisfactory ; but he treads on perilous ground when he contends, that it is not amenable to the authority of the Court of King's Bench. He argues forcibly that the general pardon, for the disregard of which the University had been termed in court 'insolent,' could have no operation on the present proceedings, they being instituted not so much to punish the offender, as to vindicate the injured party, 'whose reputation lay a-bleeding from the libel ;' that the King's gracious pardon neither was nor could be intended to operate in this case to the damage of the aggrieved party, any more than it could enable a person to retain possession of an estate of which he had fraudulently deprived the rightful owner. At all events he contends that Bentley, had he chosen to take advantage of that Act of grace, ought to have pleaded it at the bar of the Vice-chancellor's Court. The defence of the mode of proceeding *ex officio* exhibits much research into customs and precedents, and is spirited as well as argumentative.

Dr. Colbatch was careful to avoid the intemperate language, which had filled the pages of his adversary ; but he did retaliate in some sentences so caustic and acrimonious, as to prove that a sort of death-feud existed between the two parties. Two or three instances will be sufficient. Having occasion to mention De Vargas, the instrument of the Duke d'Alva's tyranny in the Low Countries, he says,

"By the way, it is worth one's notice, that there seldom arises an enemy to our Colleges, (to their discipline, I mean ; for he who would subvert that, does worse than if he attempted to batter down their walls) but a body may discern something in him, by which he bears a near resemblance to this De Vargas, either in his learning, or in his manners ; sometimes perhaps in both : a late and notable

instance of this sort might be given in one, who had he lived at the same time with De Vargas, might, for his skill in grammar, be thought to have gone to the same school. But grammar of itself, I confess, does not always polish the native roughness of some tempers; no, nor criticism neither; there may be those who have far excelled De Vargas in both these arts, and outgone him as far in the barbarity of their manners." *Jus Academicum*, p. 12.—"It will go a great way towards clearing the injured party's reputation, when it shall be publicly known who it is that hath attempted to blacken it; since whoever knows the man, knows what credit his allegations deserve, and will soon be made to understand what it was that pushed him upon so desperate an attempt." *Ibid.* p. 17.—"The design of the suit, which is now in question, is not the offender's punishment; no, nor yet the reformation of his manners; the plaintiff in this case being convinced by this time, how vain an attempt it would be for him, to bring that offender to condign punishment, and much more to correct and amend his manners. All that he pretends to by this suit is the recovery of his own good name of which the said offender, as far as in him lies, has injuriously, I will not say feloniously, robbed him," &c. *Ibid.* p. 30.—"For this cause, I am commissioned by the complainant in the present case, to tell the defendant, that as our court here proceeds according to the civil-law; none of those defamatory articles contained in his libel will be charged to his account, that have any ground or colour of truth in them, in case there be any such articles, as I am fully persuaded there is not one in all the libel. I will venture further, and do hereby invite the said defamer to make his appearance in court, with a promise, that the party aggrieved shall withdraw his complaint, and desist from any further prosecution of this cause, in case he, the said defamer, will bring sufficient proof of but any one of those articles, or, which is more, if the complainant shall not make it appear to be highly probable, that all and every of the said articles, are not only notoriously false, but known to be so by the libeller himself." *Ibid.* p. 37.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

The author having hastened the appearance of his pamphlet, before the Easter term commenced, sent copies of it to all persons of consideration with whom he was acquainted, and among the rest to the Lord Chancellor, and the Judges of the different Courts, except Sir John Pratt and Sir John Fortescue; those being the only two upon the Bench to whom he was not personally known. But he experienced the dis-

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

April 17.

The proceedings
against
Bentley
dropped.

appointment which will often be the lot of an amateur lawyer, when he attempts to give effect to his theories : as such a person is generally ignorant of the rules and maxims of the Courts of judicature, it is not to be wondered, that the information which he has gathered from writers on jurisprudence should conduct him into some practical error. All the cases which Colbatch cited, and all the points which he argued, could not get over the one objection which professional men considered fatal to the late proceedings of the Academical court. The University had, in its exigency, committed its interests to Dean Sherlock, who, besides his familiarity with business, resided, as Master of the Temple, in the centre of the legal world, and was much esteemed by the leaders of the profession. He held a consultation of eminent counsel on the day before the time fixed for showing cause against the prohibition. The two University counsel were Sir Robert Raymond and Serjeant Reynolds, each of whom was soon afterwards raised to the Bench ; besides these leaders, Mr. Mead, Mr. Fazakerly, and Dr. Strahan, the civilian, were employed ; Doctors Sherlock, Colbatch, and Middleton assisting at the consultation on behalf of the University. Here Colbatch earnestly repeated the arguments of his pamphlet ; but in vain. There was some difference of opinion among the counsel respecting the propriety of the superior Court's interference in that stage of the business, before any thing beyond a preliminary measure had been taken by the University ; but all agreed that the offence of the libel was included in the general pardon : it was therefore resolved, at the proposition of Mr. Attorney, to let the business drop without a contest, in order to avoid a judgment against the University being entered upon record.

But Bentley did not think proper that the matter should fall to the ground as quietly as his prosecutors intended : he judged that it was now his turn to act on the offensive ; and as he had before attacked Colbatch with his pen for a book which he had not written, he now attacked him by the law for one which he had written. He observed some passages of the *Jus Academicum*, in which the author, while arguing against the interference of the King's Bench, might be construed as speaking with disrespect of that Court itself. Accordingly, two days after the University lawyers had announced the intention of dropping the proceedings against him, his counsel, Mr. Reeve, moved the Court of King's Bench to take cognizance of the *Jus Academicum* as a contempt on their jurisdiction. Several passages being read, a Rule of court was granted for Wilkin, the publisher, to show cause why an Attachment should not issue against him. Colbatch was immediately advised by his friends to make interest among persons in power, in order to avert the storm that seemed ready to burst over his head. The sentences which had brought him into his enemy's power, were in his own view and intention perfectly innocent, nor had it once crossed his mind that they were susceptible of an injurious construction. The following were the passages that gave most offence :

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

April 20,
Bentley
prosecutes
Colbatch's
publication.

“ There is a strange doctrine got into Westminster Hall, where it hath prevailed for above these hundred years past, as it is like to do for these hundred to come, unless my Lords the Bishops shall think fit to take notice of it in Parliament, viz. that the King's Pardon shall put a stop to any process carried on in the Spiritual Courts, for the reformation of manners, or the salvation of a man's soul.” *Jus Academicum*, p. 19.

“ How the Reverend Judges of the High Court of King's Bench will resent their being surprised into such a thing ; or how the University will vindicate the most valuable of her privileges, which being

CHAP. once taken from her, she must bid adieu to all the rest, from so mani-
 XVI. fest and unprecedented a violation, a private member ought not so
 1722 much as to guess." p. 42.

"It may not be amiss to take notice in this place, of a general observation made by foreign writers, which hath been more than once made good here in England, that they who design to subvert the laws and liberties of any nation, commonly begin with the privileges and immunities of the Universities." p. 11.

The sentence last quoted was particularly exclaimed against, being said to contain an insinuation that not only the Judges, but the Government of King George designed to subvert the laws and liberties of the nation. It is certain, however, that the writer, whose whole mind was devoted to the maintenance of academical jurisdiction against Bentley, harboured no such views as were attributed to him, in writing these passages; of which the most that can be said is, that they were unnecessary, incautious, and ill-timed.

Interest in
 Colbatch's
 favour with
 the Minis-
 ters.

As it was clear that the interrogatories to be put to the party attached would soon force him to discover the author, and as the consequences of this proceeding might be tremendous, Colbatch's friends exerted themselves with great earnestness to procure the intercession of powerful persons in his behalf. Particularly Dean Sherlock and Dean Hare used their interest with Lord Townshend for his good offices, and if necessary, for a pardon; while Dr. Freind, the Master of Westminster School, exerted himself in a similar manner with Lord Carteret, the other Secretary of State. Both those ministers admitted the extreme hardship of a respectable clergyman being ruined for an inadvertence, committed in the course of a struggle wherein he had been an aggrieved party; and being convinced that Colbatch was an inoffensive man, promised their good offices and intercessions with the Lord Chief Justice; declaring their belief that if he would go into court and make a reasonable apology,

the matter would be terminated without further consequences. He himself preferred his applications to the Lord Chancellor, now Earl of Macclesfield: the incessant solicitations which he had been making for some years for a visitation of Trinity College, though they had no other result, yet had procured him the acquaintance of this exalted personage; who, however great might be his faults, was remarkably accessible and affable. He indulged Colbatch with many interviews; and although he condemned without reserve the offending passages of his book, promised him his good offices with the Chief Justice, to make the consequences light, and end the matter in a more favourable way than by procuring the King's pardon: and he directed him, before the matter came into court, to call upon Chief Justice Pratt, and express his contrition for his offence. But the patronage of these great ministers was not calculated to render the unfortunate divine any real service. The distinguished Judge who presided on the Bench, entertained a high notion of the dignity of his court, and the necessity of repressing all attempts to disparage or question its authority; in which feeling his three coadjutors, the Judges Powis, Eyre, and Fortescue, strongly participated. He had also too just an opinion of the sanctity of the judicial character, not to be jealous of the interference of persons in power with the administration of justice. He heard therefore the representations of the Cabinet Ministers without the least disposition to attend to them; insomuch that the Premier accounted for his inflexibility, by observing that 'Pratt had got to the top of his preferment, and was therefore refractory, and not to be governed by them.' However, when the Doctor, by advice of the Lord Chancellor, waited on the Chief Justice at his house in Ormond-street, he behaved to him with consider-

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Lord Chancellor Macclesfield.

Chief Justice Pratt.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

able candour and mildness: he declared indeed that he viewed the offence in a serious light; but assured him that he would take no advantage of his having privately acknowledged himself author of the book. A similar intimation was given to him by Judge Eyre upon whom he likewise called; and it seems highly probable that the Court had at first intended to be satisfied with the censure of the work, through the publisher; whose expenses falling upon the author, would have been a punishment at least adequate to his offence.

May 7.

The Chief Justice going to the court immediately after this interview, Wilkin was brought to the bar, to answer the charge of publishing a libel on the judicature of the kingdom. His lordship was severe in his condemnation of such an interference with public justice, by circulating insinuations against the Court, as if they were not equally ready to hear arguments on both sides of a question: that being the last day of term, he ordered him to the Marshalsea prison, to remain there till the following term, 'that they might have time to think of a proper punishment for his offence.' The affrighted bookseller made an effort to save himself by declaring that Dr. Colbatch was the author; but the Chief Justice told him that, 'he might do as he pleased about giving up the author; for it should not save him from the punishment due to the offence of circulating the pamphlet; and that his fate should be a warning to other publishers;' adding, that 'the Court would serve the author in the same way if brought before them.' Wilkin's terrors were greatly augmented when, upon applying in the evening at the chambers of Mr. Justice Fortescue to be bailed, he was informed by his Lordship, that he had that day taken as bail of the publisher of the 'Freeholder's Journal,' a trea-

The publisher committed.

sonable paper, 1000*l.*, and 500*l.* for each of two sureties; and he was actually required to produce the same amount; the Judge saying, that ‘his offence was as great or greater¹⁵.’ As this enormous bail could not immediately be procured, Wilkin had to remain in durance for the vacation; exposed to the tender mercies of the marshal, who extorted eleven pounds for allowing him the benefit of the Rules, and five pounds under pretence of excusing him from irons!

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

At the beginning of the Trinity term, the book-seller was again brought up, and received a severe reprimand from the Court; whereupon he voluntarily presented his affidavit naming the author of *Jus Academicum*. This uncalled-for discovery the Chief Justice declared should avail him nothing, and remanded him to prison: but upon the ground of the affidavit, the Court directed a rule to be served on Dr. Colbatch to show cause why he too should not be attached.

Colbatch was now advised by his lawyers and friends to lose no time in procuring the King’s pardon, which had been promised him, if necessary, by both the Secretaries of State. He was, likewise,

Colbatch
solicits the
King’s par-
don.

¹⁵ Chalmers’s Biographical Dictionary, in the account of this Judge, Sir John Fortescue, (article *Aland*) informs us that he was the friend and correspondent of Pope, to whom the poet addressed his *Imitation of Horace*, Satire II. 1., and author of the Pleadings of ‘*Straddling versus Styles*,’ in Swift’s and Pope’s *Miscellanies*. Had this been the fact, it would have been curious to remark that this abhorrence of ‘libels and satires’ showed itself in the case of Poor Wilkin to be even greater than the poet attributes to him. But unluckily, they were different personages, and not difficult to distinguish; although they were both Judges, and sat together for some years in the same Court. The person mentioned in the text was Sir *John* Fortescue, who added the surname of *Aland*; he retired from the Bench in 1746, and was made an Irish Peer. Pope’s friend was *William* Fortescue, who was first made a Judge in 1736, and after having sat successively in the Exchequer and Common Pleas, became Master of the Rolls, and died in 1750.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Lord Car-
teret.

recommended to keep out of the way, that he might not be found by Bentley's attorney, when he came to serve the Rule of Court upon him; since he would, otherwise, in the natural progress of the case, be committed about the end of term, and lie in prison the whole of the long Vacation. But when he renewed his application for the promised interference of the great ministers in his favour, he found their tone much altered since their communications with the Chief Justice. Lord Carteret in particular, had at first been profuse in his assurances of protection in case of the worst: 'should the Doctor be sent to prison, here,' said he, brandishing his pen, 'is Mercury's wand, which will soon fetch him out.' Now, however, his Lordship's language was altered, and when the hardship of the case was represented, he made himself merry upon 'University men, who sucked in notions which they called principles, and were resolved strictly to adhere to and die martyrs for them.' He advised, however, that Colbatch should present himself before the Court, and make an apology for his fault; and he would undertake that nothing should hurt him, and that he would not be committed. But Dr. Freind, whose heart misgave him on this point, begged his Lordship to pledge his word, that in case of the worst, 'Mercury's wand' should be put in operation. Re-encouraged by a fresh promise of this shield of power, the delinquent, who had changed his lodgings to escape notice, now put on his gown and appeared publicly in the streets and in Westminster Hall: here some lawyers, upon hearing the grounds of his security, told him to despair his charm, for that 'if he confessed himself the author of *Jus Academicum*, the King himself could not hinder his being sent to prison.' After all the vibrations of resolution natural

to a man in his circumstances, being assured by the Lord Chancellor that it would be better for him that the Ministry should not interfere, the Doctor determined to brave the storm. Accordingly, two days before the end of term, his counsel moved for the liberation of Wilkin, and the accepting Colbatch's recognizance for his appearance: when the Chief Justice, more moderate than his brother Fortescue, fined Wilkin 5*l.* and discharged him; and fixed 200*l.* bail for Colbatch himself, and 100*l.* for his sureties; thus leaving him at large till November, to ruminate on his unlucky predicament, and concert operations for the next campaign.

It deserves to be recorded as no common instance of spirit, that Dr. Colbatch, while he stood in need of all the interest which he could make for his personal security, yet never for a moment forgot the public cause in which he was embarked; but availed himself of all opportunities of his interviews with the Cabinet ministers and Judges, to remind them of the affairs of Trinity College, and solicit a settlement of the visitatorial power, as the only method by which the distractions of the society could be appeased. Every one allowed that this ought to be done; and all agreed in thinking the Lord Chancellor the fittest person to carry through the measure. But Lord Macclesfield only repeated the promises which experience had shown to be fallacious: on one occasion he went so far as to say, 'that he was ashamed to see him, since nothing was yet done about Trinity College.' Colbatch's eyes appear to have been gradually and unwillingly opened to the truth, that Lord Macclesfield had all along only intended to amuse him with hopes, and would never originate a measure which was disagreeable to an active partizan of the Whig interest.

CHAP.
XVI
1722.

Bentley applies to the Court of King's Bench to procure his restoration to his degrees.

Bentley, being thus able to wreak his resentment upon his adversary through the agency of that high tribunal which the latter had unwittingly offended, took no further trouble with a business which went on so agreeably to his wishes ; but occupied himself with a scheme of greater importance, his own restoration to his degrees. He had now continued three years and a half under the ban of the University ; and although possessed of the two most important preferments in the place, was deprived of all title, rank, and voice in the body, and not suffered to perform the duties of his station. For some time he had calculated upon his restoration either through the interference of a Royal visitation, or from the influence of a more friendly feeling in the University. But all prospect of the first had long passed away, and recent events, by exasperating former animosities, had made the second less probable than ever. He was all along convinced that the original proceedings against him had been arbitrary and illegal : from the language held by the Court of King's Bench in the late affair of the *Mandamus*, he collected that the judges would make no difficulty in interfering with the academical judicature if they deemed its proceedings to be faulty ; and he resolved to appeal for justice to that high tribunal. Accordingly, two days before the publisher of *Jus Academicum* was to appear before the offended Court, Bentley's counsel moved for a rule to be addressed to the University of Cambridge, to show cause why a *Mandamus* should not issue, compelling them to restore him to all his degrees. The motion was grounded upon an affidavit of his proctor, Denys Lisle, alleging that he had been suspended by the Vice-chancellor without hearing or summons, and afterwards degraded by the Senate upon the representation

May 5.

of the same personage. The judges made some remarks upon the propriety of referring such a case to a local visitor: but in fine they granted the Rule *Nisi*, for the University to show cause on the second day of the ensuing term. Bentley, having kept this rule one week, served it upon the Vice-chancellor. That officer being unequal to a matter of such importance, the academical privileges were entrusted to the care of Dr. Gooch, and his brother-in-law, the Dean of Chichester. The latter, in particular, from the opinion entertained of his talents, judgment, and knowledge of business, enjoyed the full confidence of the Senate; and he engaged in its service with as much zeal as if he had still been one of the Heads. The time was found too short for instructing counsel in the whole merits of a case which involved so much of the statutes, usages, and privileges of an University, and required a minute examination of old charters and registers. They therefore directed Serjeant Reynolds to show cause against the Rule, so far as to allege the exempt jurisdiction which the University derived from Royal charters confirmed by Acts of Parliament, and then to give a succinct narrative of the proceedings against Bentley, from the beginning of Middleton's action of debt, to the complaint preferred by him to the King in Council after his Degradation; contending that the punishment had been inflicted by an authority competent to censure the members of the University; and that the same body which gave the degrees, possessed a right to take them away. If however the Court were not satisfied with this statement, the Serjeant was directed to pray for a longer time, to allow the charters and records to be searched, and preparations made for a more particular defence of the academical privileges. The judges, as it was foreseen, did not

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

May 31.

admit those allegations as conclusive, but granted the prayer for postponement, or, in the technical phrase, enlarged the rule till next term.

University
employs Sir
Philip
Yorke as
counsel.

In the meantime great pains were taken to prepare a defence; and Colbatch drew up a very able paper, containing all the arguments by which it might be proved that the University had acted justly in punishing Bentley's contumacy; and that whatever were the merits of the case, they were not cognizable by the Court of King's Bench. It was judged that much would depend upon the leading counsel to whom this important cause was intrusted. The individual who at this time stood highest in reputation at the English bar was Sir Philip Yorke, the Solicitor General: and though he was not a member of the University, and several eminent barristers were already engaged in her service, yet it was thought proper at such a crisis to confide the academical interests to one who had a paramount character in the profession: from this circumstance began the intimate connection between the University of Cambridge and that distinguished personage, which subsisted to the end of his life, and has been inherited by his posterity¹⁶.

After several postponements, the case of the University was to have come into discussion on the 13th of November; on which day Bentley appeared in the court, supported by his friends, Dr. Bradford, Bishop of Carlisle, and Dr. Gee, Dean of Lincoln¹⁷.

¹⁶ On the conclusion of Sir Philip Yorke's pleadings in the case of Dr. Bentley, in February 1723-4, he was complimented with the title of University-Counsel. In 1749 he was chosen High Steward; in which office he was succeeded by his son, the Earl of Hardwicke, in 1764, and by his grandson, the Earl of Hardwicke, in 1806.

¹⁷ Dr. Edward Gee, who was this year removed from the deanery of Peterborough to that of Lincoln. He was also Prebendary of Westminster, and an intimate friend of Dr. Bentley. Colbatch observes in one of his

But the indisposition of the Chief Justice prevented his attending the court, and disappointed the expectations of the assembled auditory. Two days afterwards, the case was argued in favour of the University with great ability by Sir Philip Yorke. Among other things he contended, that the charters of the University exempted it from the jurisdiction of the King's Bench; and consequently that the Court had no power to interfere in behalf of the deprived Doctor. It being of primary importance that this point should be cleared up, the Court, without entering into the merits of the case, directed a writ of mandamus to the University to restore Richard Bentley to his degrees, to which a return might be made of the several facts and circumstances, showing that the Court had no authority to interfere; and upon such return, the question of jurisdiction might be argued and decided.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Nov. 15.

We must now attend to poor Colbatch, whom we left struggling to extricate himself from the toils of his enemy into which he had inadvertently fallen. His cousin, Sir John Colbatch, a surgeon of great eminence, had learned from Mr. Baron Price, that in his opinion the best and only way to escape with credit was to obtain the interposition of the Crown, by a pardon or a *noli prosequi*. For this purpose he went to town early in October, and the journal of his proceedings during the ensuing term presents only a renewal of interviews with Cabinet-ministers, and other exalted personages, by whom he was generally received with kindness and sympathy, and encouraged to look for a speedy and easy termination of his troubles. Besides his former intercessors, who

Colbatch's
case.

letters, in reference to the affairs of Trinity College, that Dr. Gee was the only person of note that he could hear of, who approved and justified Bentley's proceedings in every thing.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

renewed their kind offices, Sir William Dawes, the Archbishop of York, and Dr. Gastrell, Bishop of Chester, his old school-fellow, interested themselves in his favour. But they possessed no influence except that of character, being Tories, and the only two prelates on the Bench who opposed the Government in the affair of Atterbury's plot, and the commitment of the Duke of Norfolk to the Tower, which was just then agitated in Parliament. He discovered a more powerful friend in Lord Carleton, the President of the Council. This nobleman, formerly Mr. Henry Boyle, was the last survivor of the knot of statesmen, termed the Whig Junta, who swayed the measures of Government in the reign of Queen Anne. Being an old school-fellow and of the same college as Colbatch, he renewed his acquaintance with much kindness and sympathy, and promised his intercession in the proper quarter. It was universally allowed that the offensive sentences of *Jus Academicum* had proceeded from no malignity of intention; and as his inadvertency had already put him to an expense of more than 100*l.*, besides long and harassing attendance, people thought that the punishment had exceeded the fault, and that any further proceeding would be a great hardship. Even the Chief Justice, when it was represented to him that both Secretaries of State were desirous that he should be let off, suggested, that 'then they might procure him the King's pardon.' But Colbatch discovered too late that there was a lion in the path, which intercepted all his prospects of powerful mediation. The Lord Chancellor, from an apprehension that some of the Judges, who were more jealous than even their Chief of the dignity of their Court, might be offended if the culprit were taken out of their hands, or from some other reason, was resolved to

prevent this indulgence being extended to a person, who, though respectable and harmless, had the misfortune to be a Tory.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

Before the beginning of term Colbatch had several interviews with Lord Townshend, who treated him with the frankness and kindness which suited his character: told him that he had written to the Chancellor to make the matter up with the Judges, and that if it could not be settled in that way, he would do it by another. The Minister then entered into a familiar conversation upon the politics of the University of Cambridge, and expressed his regret that they did not endeavour to keep well with the Crown; adding this remarkable speech, 'that he had been blamed for procuring them the Royal donation of a library.' The Doctor replied, that it was in his Lordship's power to set right the most considerable body in the University, Trinity College, which had been petitioning so many years in vain for a Visitor; intimating that a redress of their grievances would naturally remove the discontented feelings which they then entertained: the Minister admitted the hardship, but laid the blame upon the indolence of the Bishop of Ely. In regard to his own affair, his Lordship sent him to wait upon the Chief Justice with a message from himself, intimating that the Crown would interfere to stay proceedings, and wishing to know in what manner that object could most properly be effected. Colbatch proceeded immediately to Sir John Pratt's, but found that he was just gone out: whereupon an unfortunate idea came across his mind, that he ought to go and communicate the Minister's design to the Lord Chancellor, lest he should appear to distrust the promise of the latter. This wily Lord, having learnt the state of the case, determined to counteract what was doing; and under

Favour promised him
by Lord
Townshend.

Prevented
by the Lord
Chancellor.

CHAP.
XVI.
1722.

pretence of smoothing the way, made the Doctor promise not to deliver Lord Townshend's message to the Chief Justice till he had himself seen him upon the subject. Colbatch however, presently perceiving that he had been surprised and tricked by this exalted personage, went back to Lord Townshend, and candidly told him what had passed : the Minister revived his spirits by promising to procure him the King's pardon the next day, and directed him to call upon him again in the evening at his office, when he should see and talk with the Chancellor. Going at the time appointed, he found a cabinet meeting just broken up : Lord Townshend, as soon as he saw him, ordered Lord Macclesfield to be recalled, and the two great men held a long conversation apart, in which the Chancellor contrived to intercept the favour designed for the unfortunate Colbatch. They then joined him, and Lord Macclesfield urged that nothing more was required but to make a reasonable apology to the Court, and that he would be committed to satisfy form ; that this would be only nominal, as he would regain his liberty the next day ; and earnestly advised him to undergo this trivial ordeal : Lord Townshend then joined in the recommendation, saying, " Do, good Doctor, do." Thus pressed, he had no alternative but to acquiesce ; although he was no longer deceived, but saw himself the victim of a hard-hearted policy. It is not easy to pronounce what was Lord Macclesfield's motive for taking so much pains to deceive and oppress an inoffensive clergyman : possibly a consciousness of his own enormous delinquencies might have given him secret apprehensions of a day of reckoning, when, exalted as he was, he should stand in need of the favour of those Judges, whom he was then so anxious to oblige.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

The only practical effect of the great interest raised in Colbatch's favour, was to prolong his suspense and vexation. During the Easter term neither the prosecutor nor the Court took any notice of him, probably expecting the business to be terminated by the interposition of Royal mercy. At the latter part of the term, he wished himself to move the Court for judgment; but his counsel dissuaded him, under the apprehension that he might remain a prisoner the whole vacation. But in the following term, the Court, on the motion of Bentley's counsel, Mr. Reeve, ordered that Dr. Colbatch should be examined by the Master of the Crown Office. The formalities of these interrogatories (a mode of proceeding which our law adopts only, I believe, in the case of attachments) were protracted through the greater part of the term, and the report of the Master would have been made to the Court on the last day, had not the interference of Lord Townshend, who sent the Solicitor of the Treasury to that officer, occasioned its postponement to the Easter term. This likewise was suffered to pass away in fruitless attendance at Westminster Hall; the prosecutor having secured his enemy in his clutches, and being in no hurry to dismiss him. At length Colbatch's patience being May 14. exhausted, he resolved at all hazards to apply for a termination of this vexatious affair. The moment chosen was the most unpropitious imaginable, owing to an unexpected incident shortly to be mentioned. Nevertheless, he was treated by Chief Justice Pratt with the mildness and candour due to a person of respectable and unblemished character: he offered an apology for his offence, at the same time reminding the Court that this was the fifth term that he had been in attendance to receive its censure. The Court, as he expected, committed him; the Chief Justice saying,

He is committed.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

Sentence by
Mr. Justice
Powis.

however, that he might move for his discharge as soon as he pleased. After little more than a week's confinement, which the indulgence of the Marshal, propitiated by a present, rendered almost nominal, Dr. Colbatch was again brought up before the King's Bench to petition for his discharge; whereupon Sir Littleton Powis, the senior Puisne Judge, delivered him his final oburgation. His Lordship had just been reading *Jus Academicum*, and was master of its contents; but, unfortunately for the author, he considered some of the reflections intended for Dr. Bentley, as levelled against the Court: he regarded Colbatch's commendations of Academical law as conveying a censure upon the Common-law of the land; and termed 'the appeals made to foreign lawyers quite foreign to the purpose:' a conceit which took his Lordship's fancy so much, that he repeated it three or four times in the course of his speech. But the most disastrous point was the motto of the book, *Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat*— This venerable Judge, who had passed a long life in the study of Law Latin, had forgotten whatever acquaintance he might have contracted with classical writers sixty years before; for he accused Colbatch of 'applying to the Court the most virulent verse in all Horace, *Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non ABROGAT*.' The culprit immediately set him right as to Horace's word; and told him besides that the motto was intended to apply, not to the Judges, but to Bentley. Sir Littleton, however, would not be driven from what he considered his strong hold; he thrice recurred to this unhappy quotation, which accused their Lordships of 'abrogating' the laws, and each time Colbatch was imprudent enough to interrupt and correct him. At last the Court remarked to his counsel, Kettelbey, that his client did not appear to be sensible of his being in con-

tempt; and, to convince him of that fact, sentenced him to pay 50*l.*, to be imprisoned till it was paid, and to give security for his good behaviour for a year¹⁸.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

While Colbatch was making provision for payment of the fine, the Chief Justice told him, that if any Clerk of the Court would answer that it should be forthcoming by the end of the term, he should have his liberty immediately. This good-nature seems to have been a hint that it would be remitted; and Mr. Kettelbey, his counsel, undertook to make a motion for that purpose; but by the same mismanagement which attended all the proceedings of that gentleman, whom Colbatch had employed merely because he was his fellow-townsmen of Ludlow, he postponed it till the last day of term, and did not rise to move till the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Powis had left the bench; and those judges who remained declined hearing such a motion except in a full Court.

At the moment that Bentley was thus punishing one of his adversaries, another of them afforded him the unexpected opportunity of taking a similar vengeance. Dr. Middleton had applied himself, in his new office of Principal librarian, to consider the proper arrangement and management of the Public Library, which had been so greatly increased by the King's noble present. The University had now devoted to this purpose the whole of the apartments over the Schools, including the Regent House: while, to supply the loss of that room, a subscription had been raised for building the present Theatre, or Senate House. The first stone of this beautiful structure had been laid by Dr. Crosse, at the head of the University, on the 24th of June, 1722: and the erection was proceeding rapidly.

Middleton's
tract, *Bibli-*
othecæ Can-
tabrigiensis
Ordinanda
Methodus.

¹⁸ There was reason to believe that it had been intended by the Court to have discharged Colbatch with the fine of one mark, had it not been for his behaviour during the Judge's speech.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

Meanwhile general attention was directed to the subject, upon which Middleton published a Latin tract, addressed to the Senate, entitled *Bibliothecæ Cantabrigiæ Ordinandæ Methodus*. His advice upon the whole management of the library is clear and judicious: he recommends, among other things, that in the classical arrangement, the King's books should be intermixed with the rest, being sufficiently distinguished by the Royal arms affixed to each volume. The Librarian seized this occasion of giving another severe slap to his enemy Bentley, who had detained for some years certain manuscripts which he was collating, and among others, the celebrated Beza manuscript, the glory of the library. Since however all these treasures were now returned, the paragraph which is quoted in my note, served only to display the unabated animosity of the writer¹⁹. But it would have been fortunate for Middleton had he stopped here: his zeal in the cause which then agitated the University, led him to prefix a dedication to the Vice-chancellor, Dr. Andrew Snape, who was diligently employed in maintaining the cause of the Senate against the Master of Trinity, and who in his inaugural speech had declared, that he was ready to

¹⁹ " Quidam tamen apud nos, viginti fere Codices MSS. e Bibliotheca Publica domum sibi transtulit; quorum aliquos undecim, alios octo, omnes autem quinque ad minimum annos sibi quasi proprios servavit; atque inter alios celeberrimum illud Evangeliorum exemplar, quod a doctissimo Beza dono olim acceperat Academia; maximum plane Bibliothecæ nostræ lumen, clarissimumque summæ vetustatis monumentum; quodque advenæ, curiosique omnes unice ferme omnium videre et versare cupiunt: ejus tamen septem jam circiter annos non modo non utendi, sed ne conspiciendi quidem, nisi impetrata prius a Viro bono venia, copiam habuit Academia: etenim cogitat Vir modestus aliis demum omnibus persuadere, quod sibi jam diu habet persuasissimum, se unum esse in hac Academia, qui manuscriptos libros evolvere dignus haberi mereatur. Huncce vero Bezæ Codicem, postquam repetitis nunciis revocare frustra laborassem, ad Bibliothecam tandem paucis ante diebus, una cum reliquis illis supra memoratis, remittere dignatus est." *Middleton's Works*, vol. iii. p. 492.

encounter any risk, even that of prison and of bonds, rather than surrender the rights and privileges of the University. He praises Snape for his devotion to the interests of the body, and reflects upon certain persons, who aimed at subjecting the academical jurisdiction to the courts of Westminster. Though these sentences were levelled at Bentley, yet they were capable of a different interpretation, and might be imagined to contain a complaint against the Judges of the King's Bench. Colbatch accordingly advised and entreated his friend to omit those words, as likely to prove injurious both to the University cause and his own; since they two would be believed to act in concert in their attacks upon the Judges: but Middleton viewed the matter in a different light, and could only be induced to soften the passage in a slight degree. Bentley, aware of the jealousy of the Judges upon that head, immediately perceived that his enemy had, by writing this book, given him an advantage; and although he had already been engaged, within the last three years, in no less than five distinct suits before the King's Bench, he did not hesitate to add a sixth, by prosecuting Dr. Middleton for a libel upon that high tribunal.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

Accordingly Serjeant Cheshyre moved for an information against the book and its publisher, naming the Principal Librarian as the avowed writer. The pamphlet being handed to the Bench, the Chief Justice pronounced, that 'if Dr. Middleton was really the author, he must be the most ungrateful man alive, considering that the Court had already treated him with so much lenity, and had done as much or even more than the law would justify, in making up the quarrel between him and Dr. Bentley.' As a preliminary step, Crownfield, the University bookseller, who had published it, was ordered to

May 14.
Prosecuted
by Bentley
for a reflection
on the
Judges.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

attend the Court to show cause why he should not be attached.

This happened to be the very day upon which Colbatch applied to the Bench to take cognizance of his own protracted affair; and he imagined this new prosecution to be only a stratagem to exasperate the Judges against himself as the supposed confederate of Middleton: an effect which it actually produced. But Bentley intended something more than a *ruse de guerre*: for he carried on a process similar to that against Colbatch, and pushed it through all its stages to a similar result. There was this difference only between the two cases: Middleton, profiting by the example of his friend, forebore to aggravate the misery and expense by delays and applications to the great. The following is the passage of his Dedication, in which the contempt of Court was considered most apparent:

“Alii interea, Doctores creandi jus nobis licet integrum permittant, de doctoratu tamen dejicere, de Senatu nostro deturbare, suo nisi arbitrato et consensu haud patiuntur; rerumque adeo Academicarum cognitionem et judicium ad forum *prorsus alienum atque externum* avocant: quorum conatus ni repellere tandem ac propulsare valuerimus, lethale quoddam vulnus huic nostræ Academiæ infligatur necesse est²⁰.”

Middleton
fined 50l.
June 20.

Accordingly, on the 15th of June, he was committed by the Court for the contempt discovered in the sentence just cited; and being again brought up five days afterwards, he was fined 50l. and discharged, after giving securities for his good behaviour for one twelvemonth.

²⁰ The words distinguished by italics were those which gave the Court most offence. When Middleton's Works were collected and printed in four volumes, thirty years afterwards, those unlucky words were thought too scandalous to be inserted; the sentence accordingly stands thus: “rerumque adeo Academicarum cognitionem et judicium ad forum ***** av-cant.” Vol. iii. p. 478.

While Bentley was thus successfully directing the weapons of law at the heads of his principal enemies, his suit against the University for depriving him of his degrees went on with that deliberate caution which was due to the important considerations involved. Snape, the Vice-chancellor, exerted himself with much energy; his principal ally was Colbatch, who during the late period of anxiety and trouble, had devoted his time and thoughts more to the public cause than even to that which involved his own fortune and liberty. The return to the mandamus of the Court of King's Bench was made in Hilary term 1723: but the argument upon it was postponed by agreement to the following term. This return, the object of which was to show that 'a mandamus did not lie,' inasmuch as the University possessed a jurisdiction not amenable to the Court, was drawn up under the direction of Dean Sherlock, and a defence of it was written by Dr. Colbatch. The last paper was composed with great industry and ability, and comprised every thing in the way of law, precedent, and argument which could be urged in defence of the Senate: and to this the University counsel had recourse for their instructions. In the Easter term, Serjeant Comyns, who was to defend the return, not having been able to make himself master of the arguments by the day appointed, moved for and obtained a postponement. But in the following term the merits of the case were argued at length by the learned Serjeants Cheshyre and Comyns, the former of whom contended for Bentley, that the return was insufficient, and contained no justification of the proceedings of the academical Senate: the latter replied by showing that the University did possess a power of this description over its own members, and that it was justly exercised in the present case; since Bentley had

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

Bentley's
cause
against the
University.

CHAP.
XVI.
1723.

The Judges
declare their
opinions *seriatim*
against the
University.

treated their jurisdiction with contempt, and when admonished by his Suspension, had refused to make his submission and pray for pardon. Upon the facts of the case there was no difference in the statement of the two parties: but so extraordinary had been the proceedings against the Doctor, that no precedent could be discovered which bore any resemblance or parallelism to them. The whole details of those events, having been faithfully laid before the reader in a former chapter, need not here be repeated; and the legal arguments of the two Serjeants are preserved in Strange's Reports. Now that the merits of the case can be considered without prejudice or passion, it is probable that every one will be of opinion that the treatment experienced by Bentley in the affair of his suspension and deprivation was violent and intemperate: that it was also illegal was pronounced by the four Judges, who delivered their opinions *seriatim*. Respecting the question of jurisdiction, they held that since the University had not alleged in their return that they had a Special Visitor, to whom the cognizance of the complaint might be referred, it was the duty of the Court of King's Bench to overhaul the proceedings of the Vice-chancellor's as well as any other inferior Court; and in case any wrong had been committed, to redress it. In the present instance they all intimated their opinion that a wrong *had* taken place; inasmuch as the Doctor had been suspended and degraded for contempt: an offence for which, supposing him guilty, he ought to have been bound over to his good behaviour. In regard to the conduct for which he had been punished, the Chief Justice observed, "As to Dr. Bentley's behaviour upon being served with the process, I must say it was very indecent; and I can tell him, if he had said as much of our process, we would have laid him by the

heels for it." But whatever might be said of other particulars, the Judges all declared that the want of notice or summons previous to the Suspension, was a defect in natural justice, which vitiated the whole proceedings. It was, besides, remarked that Bentley had been degraded by the Senate for a contempt, not upon itself, but upon the Vice-chancellor's Court: which was an unheard-of interference with another jurisdiction competent of itself to maintain its own just authority.

CHAP.
XVI.
1724.

After so strong an expression of opinion from the whole Court, it is somewhat extraordinary that the University should have still maintained a contest which seemed to promise nothing but ultimate defeat. Perhaps the reliance placed upon the commanding abilities of Sir Philip Yorke, and the great attention paid to his arguments by the Bench, determined them to try the fortune of another discussion, by keeping up the cause to its very last stage, when a motion was to be made for a *peremptory* mandamus. The business, therefore, was again argued in Hilary term 1723-24, by Mr. Reeve for Bentley, and Sir Philip Yorke, now become Attorney General, for the University. There is no doubt that every topic which ingenuity and legal skill could suggest, was urged on both sides by these great advocates, who became in the course of a few years the two Chief Justices of the land. The whole argument is given at length in Raymond's Reports: but it does not appear that any thing very material in substance was added to what had been advanced at the last discussion²¹. The Judges, however, took time to deliberate: and on the 7th of February, Chief Justice Pratt delivered

The Senate
still keeps
up the con-
test.

Peremptory
mandamus
to restore
Bentley's
degrees.

²¹ Raymond's Reports, vol. ii. p. 1334. Sir Robert Raymond had himself just taken his seat upon the bench as a Puisne Judge.

CHAP.
XVI.
1724

the final judgment of the whole Court, in condemnation of the proceedings of the University. His Lordship did not on that occasion enter at large into the various bearings of the case, but dwelt upon the one defect in the process, which never could be got over; and pronounced that to punish a person without hearing and without summons, was illegal, and contrary to natural justice. Since, therefore, there existed no other remedy against such injustice, but the interposition of that Court, they ordered a peremptory mandamus to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge, 'to restore Richard Bentley to all his degrees, and to every other right and privilege of which they had deprived him.'

It was not till six weeks after this *fiat* was issued, that the Senate took the step which it was required to do immediately. So determined were Bentley's adversaries upon resisting to the last, that petitions to the Houses of Parliament against the judgment of the Court of King's Bench were in agitation. Such measures were obviously chimerical: but it was still hoped that the humiliating necessity of rescinding the grace by which he was degraded might be avoided. A Syndicate had been appointed some months before, the principal members of which were the Vice-chancellor, the Dean of Chichester, Doctors Colbatch, Gooch, Waterland, and Middleton, to whom the whole management and plenary power in this affair had been entrusted. The first person of this body had publicly declared his resolution to undergo imprisonment, if necessary, in the cause of the academical privileges: and the reader has seen proofs of the inflexibility of some of his brethren: but the strong arm of law was neither to be resisted nor eluded. Their submission, however, was most ungraciously postponed till the latest moment. The 25th of

March, 1724, was a day of high academical interest. The whole University, after attending service at King's Chapel, assisted at laying the first stone of the new building of that College ; which ceremony was performed by Provost Snape, the Vice-chancellor. It seemed but natural that, when resistance was found to be vain, the Master of Trinity should have been admitted to join in his place at such a celebration : but this was industriously avoided ; and the grace of the Senate, which, in obedience to the mandate of superior authority, restored him to all his degrees and privileges, was postponed till the day following that solemnity.

CHAP.
XVI.
1724.

March 26.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dr. Bentley restored to his rank and station—Middleton renews his action to recover four guineas—King's favour to the Universities—Bishoprick of Bristol offered to Dr. Bentley—Great expenses of his late law-suits—Theological Schools—Examination for University Scholarship—Professor Pilgrim—Foundation of Battie's Scholarship—Causes of offence between Dr. Hare and Dr. Bentley—Hare's knowledge of the Latin comic metres derived from Bentley—He publishes Terence—His Dedication to Lord Townshend—Bentley's resentment—He prints a rival edition—Constant censure of Hare—Dissertation on the Metres—Commencement speech—Edition of Phædrus—Westerhof's Terence—Resentment of Dean Hare—'Epistola Critica' to Dr. Bland—Burman publishes Phædrus—Rupture between him and Bentley—Bentley's and Burman's editions of Lucan—Bentley's design of publishing Ovid—Still occupied on the New Testament—Vatican manuscript—His nephew, Thomas Bentley—Election of Public Orator—Bentley's controversy with Burford respecting the Old Statutes—Epitaph on Sir Isaac Newton—Bentley appoints a deputy in the Schools—Trinity College—Dr. Greene, Bishop of Ely—Opposition to the Master at an end—His son chosen Fellow—Lease of Massam House—Bentley builds a country-house—His nominations to Fellowships—Rejection of Benj. Stillingfleet—Bishop Gibson—Claims of Westminster School—Dean and Chapter solicited to interfere—Bentley resists their pretensions.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Bentley re-
stored to his
rank and
station.

WE have now seen Doctor Bentley, after a long and angry struggle, restored in triumph to all the titles and dignities of which for the space of five years and a half he had been deprived. Through the whole of that period he had maintained an unceasing contest with active and determined adversaries, the most distinguished characters of the University; and in point of ability, ingenuity, and judgment, displayed a decided superiority over them all. Even his enemies were compelled to acknowledge the address and spirit with which he made all the efforts of their hostility

recoil upon themselves. I presume that there are not many examples of an individual who has been a party in six distinct suits before the Court of King's Bench, within the space of three years : and it would probably be very difficult to find another instance of a person who has, like Bentley, been successful in every one of such proceedings.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

The senior Heads being all removed by death, the station in which the restored Doctor found himself, was that of first citizen of the academical commonwealth. His enemies, both in his own College and the University, being defeated at all points, had at present neither power nor disposition to renew the combat. So perfect was his victory, that he might well have afforded to make sacrifices for conciliation ; and it was naturally to have been expected that a literary man, who had entered upon his grand climacteric, would have chosen to pass the evening of his days in tranquillity.

By a curious coincidence it happened, that at the very time when the fortune of Dr. Bentley seemed to be in the ascendant, and triumphing over his present adversaries, the principal antagonists of his former life were experiencing adversity in its most alarming form : a few months before the termination of the academical struggle, Bishop Atterbury was deprived, attainted, and exiled, and Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and Dr. John Freind were sent state prisoners to the Tower, on suspicion of partaking in the plot for the introduction of the Pretender.

At the moment of our Doctor's restoration, Conyers Middleton, with whom had originated those disputes which so long agitated the University, was absent on a visit to Italy ; whither he had gone shortly after his last censure by the Court of King's Bench, for the recovery of his health and spirits. The results of this

Dr. Middleton renews his action to recover four guineas.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

July 18.

Feb. 1725.
He recovers
his claim.

King's
favour to the
Universi-
ties.

journey are well known : it gave occasion to the clear and admirable exposure of the pagan origin of the ceremonies of the popish religion, contained in his celebrated 'Letter from Rome;' as well as to the collection of classical antiquities, of which a full and interesting description was published many years afterwards in his *Germana quedam Antiquitatis eruditæ Monumenta*. Upon his return in the spring, finding his enemy reinstated with triumph, he thought fit to renew his old suit for the four guineas in the Vice-chancellor's Court, which had constituted the first scene of the late eventful drama. Dr. Bentley seems to have designed a measure of pacification, and intended to have sent him the money without further controversy; for Middleton writes to Colbatch from London, "Tom Bentley, whom I saw in a coffee-house, told me that his uncle had given orders to return me the four guineas in question, and wondered that Lisle had not brought them to me at Cambridge." Probably he was deterred from this design, by considering that it might be deemed a confession of having been wrong in his original claim. The action, therefore, was suffered to proceed; but as I find no mention of it except in the records of the Court, and as they only notice the appearances and steps of the plaintiff, it seems to have been an undefended suit: at the conclusion Mr. Richard Walker appeared for Dr. Bentley, and paid into Court the sum of 4*l.* 6*s.* along with the costs of suit; which, to the honour of the academical jurisdiction it must be recorded, amounted only to twelve shillings.

The rays of Royal favour now shone upon both the Universities. The King had just given a donation of 2000*l.* towards erecting the Senate-house; he also founded and liberally endowed a professorship of Modern History, both at Oxford and Cambridge;

and appointed salaries for twelve Preachers from each, to officiate in turn at the Royal Chapel of Whitehall, who were to be selected from the resident fellows. Bishop Boulter, the Dean of Christ-church, was raised to the primacy of Ireland ; and on his elevation, it is recorded that the see of Bristol was offered to the Master of Trinity. Had this station been within Dr. Bentley's reach at an earlier period of life, he would probably not have hesitated to assume it : but he now firmly declined the proposal ; alleging that the income of Bristol, far from maintaining the rank of a Bishop, would not even defray the expense of attending Parliament. This offer was made personally through the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of State, who had sent for him with that view : when it was declined, his Grace asked ' what sort of preferment he desired or expected : ' " such preferment," replied Bentley, " as would not induce me to desire an exchange¹."

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Bishoprick
of Bristol
offered to
Dr. Bentley.

In the late protracted law proceedings Dr. Bentley, although his adversaries were made to pay the greater part of his costs, yet found the remainder press so heavily upon his finances, as to diminish the gratification of his triumph. The following incident occurred at the first assizes after his restoration. The Judges being at Trinity Lodge, one of them took occasion to observe, " Dr. Bentley, you have not yet thanked us for what we have done for you : " the reply was of a kind which his Lordship could hardly have anticipated : " What am I to thank you for ? Is it for only doing me justice, after a long-protracted law-suit ? Had you, indeed, restored me at once to my rights, I

¹ This anecdote, which is very circumstantial, is communicated to me by Bentley Warren, Esq., who received it, along with many other particulars, from his maternal uncle, Dr. Richard Bentley, of Nailstone. The Duke of Newcastle had just commenced his ministerial career, which continued, with very little intermission, for forty-three years.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

might have expressed my obligations : but such have been your delays, that, if I had not been an economist in my earlier years, I must have been ruined by the pursuit of justice²."

Death of
Dr. Brook-
bank.

Dr. Bentley was this year deprived of two of his University friends, with whom he had long lived in intimacy ; Bishop Bradford, who succeeding Atterbury both at Rochester and Westminster, resigned the headship of Corpus-Christi College ; and the amiable Dr. Brookbank, who died, and was buried by his own desire in St. Edward's Church-yard ; where his tombstone bears an inscription briefly describing his character, from the pen of his illustrious friend³.

Theological
Schools.

The restored Doctor was now assiduous in his attendance at all meetings for the transaction of public business, as well as at the University Church, from which, while denied his academical rank and station, he had been virtually excluded. The Theological Schools recovered their Professor, and the disputations resumed their interest and importance. Some anecdotes of the first Act at which he presided after his restoration, are recorded by one who witnessed it : the respondent was Mr. John Addenbroke, Fellow of Catherine Hall, and afterwards Dean of Lichfield, who experienced no gentle treatment under the hands of so critical a moderator. He happened to have been an active partizan against Bentley in the affair of his Degradation ; and to this was attributed the caustic

² For this anecdote I am likewise indebted to Mr. Bentley Warren.

³ Hic sepeliri voluit

JOANNES BROOKBANK, LL.D.

Aulæ SS. Trinitatis Socius,

Dioceseos Eliensis Officialis,

Humanitate, Integritate, Comitatus

Conspiciuus ;

Natus oppido Liverpool, denatus Cantabrigiæ,

An. MDCCXXIV, Ætatis LXXIII.

Per totam vitam ΥΑΡΟΝΟΤΗΣ.

language of the Professor, who was commonly very indulgent to the disputants. However, the anecdote itself, as given in the note, imputes to him no interference which was not strictly within the province of a moderator ⁴.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

In the performance of his professorial duties in the year 1724, there occurred an incident which, from the celebrity of some parties concerned, and the importance of its consequences, deserves to find a place in academical history. One of the two University scholarships, the only public rewards then existing for the encouragement of classical literature among the students, became vacant by the resignation of John Walker. The electors are the Vice-chancellor, the five Regius Professors, and the Public Orator. One of these seven, Mr. Pilgrim, the Greek Professor, happened to be absent from Cambridge at the time of the examination. We have had occasion to observe, that the part taken by this gentleman in

Examina-
tion for
University
scholar-
ships.

Professor
Pilgrim.

⁴ The anecdote is recorded by Kippis in the *Biographia Britannica*, vol. ii. p. 247, on the authority of an ancient and respectable dignitary of the Church, who was present when it occurred. "In the first Divinity Act, which was kept in the public Schools, after Dr. Bentley's restoration to his degrees, and in which Dr. Bentley himself moderated as Professor, Dr. John Addenbroke, then Fellow of Catherine Hall, and afterwards Dean of Lichfield, was respondent for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. His questions were, 1, *Galei argumenta non valent contra Pædobaptismum*. 2, *Miracula a Christo edita probant divinam ejus missionem*. Against the terms of the first the Professor objected, as confining the question to Gale's arguments, saying, *Quid nobis cum homuncione Galeo?* On which it was observed, that the last Determination Dr. Bentley made in the Schools before he was degraded, was upon the question concerning Pædobaptism; and that he had said, that he would only consider Gale's arguments, as that writer had said every thing on the negative side, that could be alleged against infant baptism. To the terms of the other question, he objected bad Latin, saying, - 'we have heard of *edere librum, edere signum populo*; sed quis unquam audivit, *edere miraculum?* *Miracula facta sunt non edita.*' N.B. Addenbroke was said to be a great stickler against Bentley, in the Senate-house, while his Degradation was in debate."

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

the disputes of Trinity College had subjected him to the Master's resentment, who went so far as to refuse to admit pupils under him. But the University made him ample amends for this ill-usage: the valuable living of Standish in Lancashire having fallen to the disposal of the Senate, Professor Pilgrim was chosen Rector by a large majority⁶; and he was at this moment gone to take possession of his preferment. Many students entered the lists as candidates; but when the day of contest arrived, only six encountered the test: three of these subsequently maintained a considerable name in literature, William Battie and Thomas Morell, of King's, and Richard Bentley, of Trinity College. The last was son of the Master's younger brother, Joseph, and possessed a full share of the talent which seems to have belonged to the whole family of the Bentleys. The candidates were examined by all the electors in succession; and the Vice-chancellor, Dr. Snape, put their knowledge and abilities to the trial in presence of one another, that each might be himself a witness of the merits of his competitors: he expressed, however, a difficulty in making up his own mind about the most deserving. On the day fixed for the decision, the suffrages were found to be equally divided between Battie and Bentley: the Vice-chancellor with the Professors of Law and Physic, Dr. Dickens and Dr. Greene, voting for the former, and the Professors of Divinity and Hebrew with the Public Orator, for the latter. As the existing regulations contained no provision for deciding a case where the votes were equal, the

Oct. 26.

⁶ "The poll for the rectory of Standish, the advowson of which belonged to a Papist, took place Jan. 22, 1723-24.

Dr. Baker, St. John's 77 votes.

Professor Pilgrim, Trinity . . . 125 votes."—*Attwood's Diary*.

electors separated leaving the prize undetermined. The Vice-chancellor however summoned another meeting in few days, which Doctors Bentley, Bouquet, and Ayloff, did not think fit to attend. In this difficulty the proper course would have been to wait for the return of the Greek Professor, and submit the merits of Battie and Bentley to his decision: and this was perhaps the view of the seceders. But the other party apprehended some artifice from Dr. Bentley in favour of his nephew; particularly as the office of the Vice-chancellor was to expire in a few days, and his successor might entertain a different opinion on the point in controversy: they resolved, therefore, to traverse such designs by a vigorous measure. On the following day they laid a representation of the whole affair before the Senate, not doubting but that the majority would readily enter into any step adverse to Dr. Bentley. This statement was followed up by a grace, decreeing that, on the present occasion, it should be referred to Lord Craven, as representative of the founder, to name which of the two young men should hold the scholarship; and that in future, when an equality of votes occurred, that candidate should be elected for whom the Vice-chancellor had voted. It was in vain that Bentley and his friends opposed this grace; it was carried by a majority of 54 against 21⁶; and Lord Craven, in compliment to the wish of the Senate, determined in favour of Battie, as being the candidate who had the suffrage of the Vice-chancellor⁷.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Oct. 30.

Oct. 31.

The Senate
gives a double
vote to
the Vice-
chancellor.

⁶ *Attwood's Diary*.

⁷ The account of this business has been taken partly from the representation in the Register, and other records in possession of the University; partly from the narrative given by Morell, one of the candidates, in a letter to Mr. John Nichols, dated Feb. 1781. (*Lit. Anecd.* vol. iv. p. 600.) Dr. Morell, a person to whose labours the cause of classical education is essentially indebted, commits a few inaccuracies, as might be expected, in

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Thus the rule of giving to the Chief Magistrate a second voice in equally balanced cases, which has been since adopted with relation to other prizes in the University of Cambridge, originated in party spirit, and was designed to carry a particular point. Its introduction is much to be regretted: as an expedient to cut the knot in cases of difficulty, hardly any plan could be devised less satisfactory to the feelings of candidates for honours: even the resource of casting lots would be preferable. The admission of official patronage in deciding questions where literary merit is the sole object of enquiry, involves an obvious inconsistency: and the person to whom the privilege of a double vote is given, generally happens to be unable to devote so much leisure and attention to the investigation as any other of the electors.

It is not to be wondered that Dr. Bentley should have been suspected by his enemies of partiality to his own nephew; but there is no reason to believe that his vote was not given honestly and conscientiously, or that the youth was inferior in point of ability or scholarship to his rival. Dr. Ayloffe and Dr. Bouquet, who voted for young Bentley, were honourable and independent men, and, as the reader has observed, were never backward in opposing the Master, when they disapproved his conduct; and it was their sincere conviction that his nephew was entitled to the scholarship by his examination^s.

This was the first occasion, as far as I can discover, on which general attention was drawn, even in academical circles, to a public examination in the University of Cambridge. The memory of the trans-

relating what had happened fifty-seven years before; and these are rather increased in the transfusion of his account into the *Biographical Dictionary*, article *Battie*.

^s This fact is incidentally mentioned in Dr. Colbatch's manuscripts.

action produced a singular effect upon the mind of Battie, the successful candidate. In the fulness of time, when his practice as a physician had conducted him to independence and opulence, he showed his gratitude for the benefits experienced from Lord Craven's scholarship, by founding and endowing a similar one, which bears his name; but in certain alterations made in the rules, he shows that the recollection of his own success was not unaccompanied by soreness. In Battie's Scholarship, the Professors of Hebrew and Greek, and the Public Orator, are excluded from examining, and in their places are substituted the Provost of King's, and the two Proctors: a change which could hardly have been made by any person not under the influence of peculiar feelings. Dr. Battie orders the examinations to take place in the presence of all the candidates, 'that they be witnesses of each others' abilities, and that all partiality may, as much as possible, be prevented in the electors:' and his gratitude to Provost Snape is marked by assigning to the Provost of King's a double vote, in case of the opinions of the examiners being equally divided between two candidates⁹.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Foundation
of Battie's
Scholarship.

Our great critic was now embarked on one of the most considerable of the undertakings which he ever brought to a completion—his edition of Terence. It has been mentioned that he was occupied upon this favourite author about the year 1713, but was prevented from maturing his design by the approaching trial at Ely House. It is probable that it would

⁹ Dr. Battie reserved to himself the disposal of his scholarship during his life-time, and it was in fact filled by his own nominations till his death in 1776. The first scholar on this foundation, elected on the score of merit by open competition, was my learned and accomplished friend Jonathan Raine, Esq. M.P. Chief Justice of the North Wales Circuit, who was made Battie's Scholar in 1785.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Causes of
offence be-
tween Dr.
Hare and
Dr. Bentley.

never have been resumed, but for an unexpected occurrence which called forth all his energies: this was the publication of Terence by his former friend Dr. Hare, the Dean of Worcester. Bentley, as the reader may recollect, entertained a belief that the project of an edition of the classics in *Usus Frederici Principis*, for which he was to have had a pension of 1000*l.* a year, had been interrupted in the first instance, by the suggestions of Dr. Hare. From that time their intimacy tacitly subsided; but no rupture took place: Bentley chose, to use his own words, *amicitiam dissuere, non disrumpere*: and they continued to be reputed and spoken of as friends¹⁰. In the meantime however, other grounds of offence had occurred: Bentley was of course displeased at Hare's having repeated, in the hearing of his enemies, an unguarded expression respecting his intended edition of the New Testament, which was consequently proclaimed abroad in one of Middleton's pamphlets¹¹. But he was likely to have been still more irritated by the Dean's exerting his interest with Lord Townshend in behalf of Dr. Colbatch, when the latter lay exposed to the perils of a prosecution: this interference was no secret; and though proceeding only from compassion to an individual, Bentley was sure to consider it as an open adhesion to the cause of his inveterate adversaries. It is possible also, that he deemed Hare's confidential intimacy with the Minister an obstacle to his own preferment.

While such were the Doctor's feelings towards his old ally and panegyrist, the appearance of his edition of Terence, about the middle of 1724, produced a different sort of irritation. Hare was an excellent

¹⁰ Markland, in his *Epistola Critica*, addressed to Hare, in the preceding year, speaks of Dr. Bentley as the great friend of the Dean.

¹¹ See Chapter xiv. Vol. II. p. 74. *note*.

Latin scholar, and had a great deal of true taste in criticism : during the period of his intimacy with Bentley, for whom he entertained the sincerest admiration, their conversation frequently turned upon the versification of the Latin comic poets, a subject to which the one had attended from his youth, and of which the other, like most scholars of that day, was perfectly ignorant. For the general inattention to this nice and difficult topic, there was a great excuse : several ancient writers have spoken of the metres of the Latin comedians, and of Terence particularly, in such terms as show that even in those days the licences which they used were not perfectly comprehended : the verses are constructed on so loose a plan, that they seem to differ but little from prose ; and as it was deemed impossible to reduce them to any certain rules, people spared themselves the trouble of an investigation in which complete success was not to be expected. By the instructions of our critic, Hare was not only made acquainted with the leading principles of the Terentian verse, but was convinced that the lines might even now be scanned according to the intention of the poet. His good sense could not fail to show him how essential this knowledge is for the correction of the author's text, and the rejection of emendations made by critics who were ignorant or regardless of the metre. Nor are those the only fruits to be derived from this branch of knowledge : every one is sensible of greater pleasure in the perusal of a poet, and recollects him better, when his ear recognises the harmony of numbers, than if he were to read the verses as mere prose. Hare listened to the doctrine of his friend with avidity, but used to return to him with a complaint not unlike that of Cicero's dialogist about Plato : " While I am with you I seem to understand it all, but when I come to con it over by myself at home, I

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Hare's
knowledge
of the Latin
Comic Me-
tres derived
from Bent-
ley.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Faernus's
edition of
Terence.

find I know nothing." Bentley advised him to study the edition of Gabriel Faernus, and gave him further lectures on this mysterious subject¹². Faernus was an admirable scholar, about the middle of the sixteenth century, who was patronized by the Medicean family and the Cardinal Borromeo; he possessed a much greater insight into the versification of Latin comedy than any scholar before Bentley, and corrected Terence upon the best *data*, the collation of all the ancient manuscripts which Italy could supply, and a careful observation of the laws and licences of the versification. But he died young, before he could publish or complete his work: it was printed at Florence after his death by his friend the celebrated Peter Victorius, and reprinted several years after at Heidelberg. It happened however that the innumerable editors of Terence who succeeded him had generally neglected Faernus; his book was become extremely rare, and scarcely known even to the learned.

Hare publishes
Terence.

Dean Hare probably longed for Bentley's edition of this poet with more anxiety than any other of his admirers. But when the Doctor had obtained the chair of Theology, and in addition to his official labours, had embarked in a critical edition of the New Testament, he thought, naturally enough, that there was no longer any prospect of the world seeing his promised Terence; and conceived the idea of becoming himself the editor of that comedian, and introducing to his contemporaries a metrical knowledge of his verses. Accordingly he made the edition of Faernus the foundation of his own, adhering generally to his text, and printing as an appendix the whole of his annotations. A critical apparatus was ready pre-

¹² Communicated by Bentley to Dr. Salter.

pared for his hands by Dr. Leng, the Bishop of Norwich, whom we have had occasion to mention as the publisher of Terence, above twenty years before : that editor had entered in the same volume the collations of all the English manuscripts that he could find, as well as the various readings given by Faernus and other editors, and had presented the whole collection to his college, Catherine Hall ; from whence it was lent for the use of the Dean of Worcester. But Hare's main object was to publish a metrical copy of the poet, or in other words, to enable his reader to scan every line in his comedies. For this purpose he gave a full and elaborate dissertation upon comic metres, and began by supposing that his readers, presumed to be grown gentlemen, were ignorant of the subject, and stood in need of the most particular directions. His instructions, being operose and minute in detail, and trusting nothing to the ear or judgment of the reader, plainly betrayed the fact, that the Dean had himself made this acquisition at a recent period, and was not really familiar with the science which he taught. Not satisfied with these preliminary directions, he filled the whole text of the author with a multiplicity of marks, sometimes dividing the verse, sometimes the words, pointing the pauses to be observed by the reader, and noting the quantities of syllables when they varied from the ordinary rules of prosody. This mangled appearance of the verses is disagreeable to the eye, and presents Terence in a form rather to be scanned than to be read. The part of the work on which he bestowed the least pains are his notes ; they are, however, scholar-like and sensible ; and upon the whole, there has been a harsher judgment entertained of the edition than it deserves, owing to the manifest superiority of its rival.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

His dissertation on
the metres.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

Hare's de-
dication to
Lord Town-
shend.

The Dean of Worcester prefixed to his Terence a long dedication to Lord Viscount Townshend; written in an elegant Ciceronian style: this piece is alike creditable to the statesman and the dedicator, whose intimacy with his friend and patron had begun at King's College, and was maintained and cemented by mutual regard. The topics of collaudation, relating to the public and private conduct of the Minister, are well chosen and judiciously handled: his services in the suppression of the Rebellion of 1715, his return to office to heal the wounds and relieve the distresses occasioned by the South-sea madness, and his industry and sagacity in unravelling the late conspiracy, were just subjects of panegyric: but all mention of the noble patronage which he had extended to his University is unaccountably omitted. The editor introduces in his dedication a very just and well-written account of the peculiar merits of the Comedian, and the value of his productions. He remarks with much truth, that the neglect of this fascinating poet among men of mature age, who are most capable of appreciating and enjoying him, arises from the habit adopted at many schools, of putting him into the hands of very young boys, and compelling them to learn small portions at intervals of time; a method which precludes all chance of their deriving enjoyment from the comedies, and only leaves on their minds an impression of dissatisfaction and disgust. Much is likewise said about the superior tone of morals, and the greater purity of ideas and expression found in the works of this writer, than in other comedians; and particularly the contrast which he presents to the licentiousness of the modern stage: this remark, which has been frequently made, was probably introduced here by way of apology for a dignitary of

the Church employing his leisure in such a publication.

CHAP.
XVII.
1734.

The novelty of the method, and reputation of the editor procured for Hare's Terence a great circulation, and a second edition in quarto was almost immediately required. The resentment which it occasioned in the mind of Dr. Bentley is proved from his immediate resolution to overturn its credit, by producing an edition of his own. A reader unacquainted with the private history just related, would be at a loss to discover sufficient cause, or any cause at all, for the violent offence which he conceived: particularly since he is mentioned in the preface in terms of ample praise, as the best qualified of all living scholars to become the editor of Terence: nay further, his present more important undertaking of the New Testament is spoken of in a handsome and gratifying way¹³. Bentley however complained that Hare had turned to his own purposes, without acknowledgment, the information extracted from his unsuspecting communications; that, to use his own term, 'he had interverted him.' Once, and but once, the Dean acknowledges an obligation to his former friend, as

Bentley's
resentment.

¹³ "Erat quidem cum non mode vehementer sperarem, sed et certa spe confiderem hanc operam a Viro in his literis facile principe susceptum iri, clarissimo nostro Benteio: Sed jam plures anni sunt, quod omnis spes illa decolavit; consilium quod de tempore in tempus Vir eruditissimus distulerat, gravioribus negotiis subinde alio trahentibus, videtur in solidum deposuisse ex eo tempore, quo ad Regiam Theologiæ Cathedram in Academia Cantabrigiensi evectus est, et ad Novum Fœdus Græcæ et Latine ex antiquissimis codicibus pristino nitori restituendum animum adjecit, ut Græcum Textum ab insana illa variarum lectionum mole, quam recentiores codices invexerunt, liberaret, et Hieronymi Versionem ab erroribus purgatam talem daret, qualis e doctissimi Patris manu exiit; opus profecto grande, et tanti viri diligentia, acumine, judicio in primis dignum!

"Cum vero hæc me spes, de qua plurimum mihi sæpe gratulabar, ita penitus destituisset, cœpi subinde mecum agitare, annon et ipse quadam tenus præstare possim, quod tam avidis votis a tanta manu frustra expectassem."—*Præfatio*, p. xxvi.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

having learnt from him the proper method of dividing Iambic verses in the enunciation : where, by-the-bye, he mistook the directions of his instructor, and supposed that the rule of cutting off the first half foot, and then reading the rest of the line as trochaic, which Bentley applied to Trimeters, ought likewise to be adopted in Tetrameters ; and accordingly disfigured every verse of that description, by a misplaced mark of intersection. Nevertheless, a jealous and scrutinizing eye might detect in the book several proofs of a disposition to disparage our critic ; as for instance, where the editor mentions the discovery of a system of Cretic measures, and another of Bacchaic measures in Terence, which are given in Bentley's notes upon Cicero's Tusculans ; and plainly insinuates that he had stolen those observations from an obscure edition published by one Bergius at Leipsic, 150 years before ; which it is probable that Bentley had never seen ¹⁴. Nor was this all : in the dedicatory epistle to Lord Townshend there occur the following words : *Nosti pessimos quosque, dum potentia valerent, impensissime fuisse celebratos ; et ipsas etiam reipublicæ pestes, dum principem in illa administranda locum obtinerent, suos præcones habuisse.* Though this is no more than a general remark, applicable to all times and all countries, yet the spirit of jealousy displayed against Bentley, makes one suspect that it was intended as a bitter reflection upon the latter's dedication of Horace to the Earl of Oxford, while Lord Treasurer, whose administration it was a fashion among the Whigs to denominate 'the worst of times : ' and such an allusion to a sore topic was likely to inflame the irritation in the Doctor's mind. The result was that, although

¹⁴ See Hare's and Bentley's respective Notes on Ter. Andr. III. ii. 1. and IV. i. 1.

busied with the duties of his professorship, and called upon by his engagements to the public to finish his Greek Testament, he did not hesitate to undertake such an edition of Terence, as might at once supplant and extinguish that of the Dean of Worcester.

CHAP.
XVII.
1724.

To this work he betook himself with an energy as great as he had ever displayed at the most active period of life, and showed the mistake of those who imagined that years had weakened either his spirit or powers of exertion. His object was twofold; to give the reader a critical edition of Terence with a corrected text and metrical arrangement of every verse, and at the same time to censure the performance of his rival. The industry with which he accomplished both purposes, and his rapidity of execution are alike astonishing, and mark the powerful genius of our veteran critic. His text professes to be corrected in not less than a thousand places; and the reasons for almost every change are given in the notes. The latter, as is proved by internal evidence, must have been for the most part written on this occasion; and such was the eager industry with which he hastened the work, that he allowed himself only one week to despatch the notes upon each comedy¹⁵. That the reader might be able to recognize the measure of verses which differ so prodigiously from those of stricter poetry, Bentley marked with an acute the first accented syllable of every *dipodia* in every line of Terence: a laborious task, which must have vastly increased the trouble of correcting the press. Richard Dawes, one of his most uncandid adversaries, sneers at this diligence, as imposing useless labour upon himself and his printer¹⁶. But I apprehend that most readers of Bentley's

He prints a rival edition.

Accental marks of the measures.

¹⁵ This was his own statement to Dr. Salter. See *Gent. Mag.* 1779, vol. xlix. p. 547.

¹⁶ Dawes. *Miscellanea Critica*, p. 193.

CHAP.
XVII.
1725.

Terence will find occasions to thank him for not having spared his trouble in this respect.

Corrections
of the text.

Dr. Bentley printed the whole of Faernus's notes, not, like his rival, at the end of the volume, but at the bottom of each page intermixed in the same series with his own; an arrangement far more convenient to the reader. The besetting sin of his criticism, a proneness to subtile refinement and unnecessary corrections, pervades this edition, though in a smaller degree than that of Horace. It is to be wished that many of these changes had been spared: but a still greater number deserve unmixed praise. And it is certain that by the united effort of genius, acuteness, and nicety of ear, he has restored a multitude of passages which were before corrupted. After all that can be said to the disparagement of this hasty performance, I believe that most lovers of the great comedian of Rome, will acknowledge that they read him with less embarrassment and more satisfaction in Dr. Bentley's text than in any other copy¹⁷.

Constant
censure of
Hare.

His censure of Hare, which unquestionably was the primary motive of the edition, is kept up in his notes from the first page to the last with unwearied severity: every untenable position of the rival editor is attacked by Bentley, who seizes such occasions to exhibit his own superior skill, and generally succeeds in engaging the reader in his favour. But although

¹⁷ Professor Wolf, in an account of Bentley inserted by him in a German literary journal, says that in his Terence there are fewer things which ought to be rejected than in his editions of other authors. Professor Hermann printed an academical dissertation at Leipsic, in 1819, to dispute the truth of this observation: this essay, like all Hermann's writings, contains many ingenious and acute criticisms, and some well-considered remarks on Bentley's peculiar merits: but with respect to its object, I cannot perceive that it shakes the truth of Wolf's observation, which was intended, I presume, to compare Bentley's Terence with his Horace, Phædrus, Manilius, and Lucan: and I agree with him in thinking his text of Terence more free from errors than that of any of those poets.

his language is caustic and contemptuous, he never gives way to the angry and abusive style which marked at that time the quarrels of continental scholars : he seems however to have understood in what way he could most gall and irritate the person by whom he thought himself ill-treated. Among other methods of mortifying Hare, he industriously abstains from naming him throughout the volume, but alludes to him in every page under the designations of *ὁ δεῖνα*, *quidam*, *alius*, *est qui*, &c. and when he designs his sneer to be peculiarly provoking, terms him *Vir eruditus*.

CHAP.
XVII.
1725.

Bentley's notes upon Terence do not run into a discursive length like those upon Horace, nor do they embody so great a store of erudition ; but they are elegant, and such as the purpose demanded. It is right to add that the volume is more free from inaccuracies, than might have been expected from the haste with which it was carried through the press.

After a few sentences of preface, Bentley printed a dissertation upon the Metres of Terence. This production, which as being extemporary he termed *Schediasma*, is in fact the clearest and most satisfactory account that has ever yet been written of that difficult subject. Although the devotion of a greater length of time would have rendered his essay more perfect, and although the perpetual reflections on the errors of his rival had better have been spared, yet it would not be easy to find nineteen pages of any writer upon metre from whence so much solid information is derived : while the arrangement is so lucid, and the style so pleasing, that much interest is given to a subject which is in itself rather dry and repulsive. The superiority over Hare's dissertation is very remarkable. The doctrine indeed is essentially the same in both ; and, except upon a few points, there is no very

Bentley's
Dissertation
on the Me-
tres of Te-
rence.

CHAP.
XVII.
1725.

material difference in the details : but the manner of handling them marks the distinction between the master of a subject with which he has been conversant from his youth, and the amateur who is instructing others in a species of knowledge, which he has himself acquired for the first time at an advanced age.

Commence-
ment
Speech.

After the *Schediasma* there follows an oration, delivered by Dr. Bentley at the Cambridge Commencement in 1725, on the occasion of his creating seven Doctors of Divinity. What was the reason for inserting it in a work of so dissimilar a kind as an edition of Terence, it is not easy to determine ; but being the only one of his Commencement-speeches which is published, we are glad to meet with it in any situation. This production is short and sprightly ; all its topics are treated with remarkable good humour ; nor is there a word which could give offence to any party, or revive the recollection of the angry feuds which had distinguished the late years of academical history. The tone in which he rejoices at the increasing prosperity of the University, is that of a person who had never felt any thing but affection, and never experienced any but kind treatment from that body. This prosperity he attributes mainly to the patronage and munificence so liberally extended to it by the Monarch : and he takes occasion to praise his daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales, whose encouragement of learned men, and particularly of the first English divines, constitutes a marked feature in the history of the country as long as she lived. The greater part of this short oration consists of an explanation of the origin and meaning of the several ceremonies, which by ancient custom are used in the creation of a Doctor. It is impossible not to admire his address, and occasional eloquence in giving an interest to those forms, which to the ignorant might appear barbarous or

ridiculous. Once only he may be fancied to allude to his own history: when expressing a wish that some one of the seven new Doctors might succeed him in the chair, he says, that in spite of its soft cushion and elegant appearance, *ea, si expertis creditis, quovis scamno durior est et molestior; quovis stadio et curriculo exercitatio.*

CHAP.
XVII.
1725.

It would have been well for the credit of Dr. Bentley had he rested here, and given his Terence to the world as soon as the printing was completed. But it occurred to him to strike an additional blow at the rival against whom he was so much exasperated. Hare had announced his intention of editing the Fables of Phædrus, and had them nearly ready for the press. Bentley resolved to anticipate him in this publication, as he had himself been anticipated in that of Terence. He had made no preparations for this work, except such emendations and conjectures as he was in the habit of writing in the margin of all classical authors in the course of their perusal. Many of these were of the most daring class of his emendations; and many more, though ingenious and plausible, were unnecessary. All, however, were introduced into the text; and the notes did little more than point out the supposed faults of the former readings, and then ordered the substitution of the new ones by a sort of critical decree; the reasons of which he frequently left for others to explain¹⁸. Great as had been the haste with which the Doctor's Terence was completed,

Edition of
Phædrus.

¹⁸ This concise and imperious brevity is acknowledged and defended by a sentence of a very short preface, which itself indicates the haste used in printing the book:

“Porro in emendationibus nostris proponendis brevitatis laudem, qua Phædrus ipse tantopere se effert, studio sectati sumus: contenti fere rationem correctionis uno verbo indicasse; nonnumquam de uno quidem; studiosis, qui post me mea probabunt, eam provinciam relinquens.”

CHAP.
XVII.
1726.

the Fabulist was despatched with ten-fold expedition. In none of his publications did he display so much presumption, as in putting forth this crude collection of new readings, supported by notes, the jejuneness of which formed a remarkable contrast to his copious annotations upon Horace, and which were unworthy even to appear in the same volume with his edition of the Comedian: and never did he more expose himself to the attacks of enemies, than when, at the suggestion of pique and resentment, he launched this puny and meagre performance into the troubled waters of criticism. That it might come forth under Royal auspices, the edition of Phædrus, having appended to it the Sentences of Publius Syrus, was dedicated to William, afterwards Duke of Cumberland, then a boy of five years old; while the Terence was inscribed to his elder brother, Prince Frederick, whose portrait engraved by Vertue forms the frontispiece of the book ¹⁹.

The volume issued forth at the beginning of 1726, and immediately excited the attention of the learned throughout Europe. Bentley's dissertation upon the Terentian Metres at once made plain and easy a subject which was before intricate, and, as many imagined, entirely hopeless: and an edition of the author, containing the scansion of every verse, proved to all, even to those who might take occasional exceptions, that the problem was fairly solved, and the laws of Terence's measures discovered. This

Westerhof's
Terence.

¹⁹ The preface just mentioned begins with noticing a very remarkable fact respecting the three writers who are included in this volume: "Quod Phædri fabulas et Publii Syri sententias huic Terentii editioni subjunxerim; ea partim causa erat, quod hi soli præter Plautum et fragmenta quædam aliorum nunc extant, qui eadem qua Terentius licentia in senariis sint usi; partim quod hi tres, pari conditione liberti et peregrini, in non ita dissimili argumento Comædiis, Mimis, et Apologis, omnia Italorum ingenia facile superaverint—."

publication was attended with another peculiar circumstance of triumph. A large and handsome edition of Terence, accompanied with a commentary, had been for some time in the press at the Hague : the Dutch editor, Westerhof, mentions in his preface Bentley's idea of restoring the metrical arrangement of the lines of this comedian, with the following sneer : *Habebit igitur in quo se exerceat Vir Cl. RICHARDUS BENTLEIUS, si quod ad Horat. Serm. II. 5. 79. p. 513. profitetur, aliquando novam TERENTII editionem ad priscos numeros adornaturus sit* : he then proceeds to show the difficulty of recovering the metres of the Comedian, and argues that the attempt must be at the present day hopeless, chimerical, and absurd : for this purpose he writes three pages of common-place remark, really designed to veil his own ignorance of the subject. Unluckily for Westerhof, Bentley's Terence appeared at the same moment as his own : and scholars saw the very achievement which one editor pronounced to be impossible, actually accomplished by the other. Nor was this all : the popularity of Bentley's performance, causing another edition to be immediately in request, it was printed, like his Horace, at Amsterdam ; and the person employed by the bookseller to construct the index was no other than Westerhof himself, who thus condescended to assist the triumph of his rival.

CHAP.
XVII.
1726.

The effect of Bentley's publication upon the mind of Dean Hare was to irritate and provoke him beyond his power of endurance. He saw that the fruits of his own labour were at once driven out of the field, and that their memory was likely to be preserved chiefly by the censures which they had incurred. He had resolved upon revenge even when he knew only from rumour that the book was in preparation. When it appeared, he could quickly

Resentment
of Dean
Hare.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

discover that in the treatment of Terence his adversary's advantage was so great, that he had little chance of obtaining satisfaction by a controversy. But Bentley's extreme imprudence in printing his hasty, crude, and unsupported revision of the text of Phædrus, afforded his angry opponent an ample field for retaliation. Hare had been for some time preparing a new edition of that author: consequently, his materials for the discussion were ready: and it was not difficult for so able and sensible a scholar to expose his rival's needless alterations, made in the very wantonness of critical licence. The Dean drew up a review of Dr. Bentley's notes on Phædrus in the form of an *Epistola Critica*, addressed to his friend Dr. Bland, the Headmaster of Eton School. His resentment, however, did not lead him to precipitate the publication; and by waiting for leisure, he was able to direct a severer blow upon his adversary. The censure appeared in the beginning of the following year, in 150 quarto pages: the author, though not named in the title page, was unreservedly acknowledged to be Dean Hare.

'Epistola
Critica' to
Dr. Bland.

Though this epistle is learned, abounding in judicious remarks, and written not without elegance, it probably finds at the present day but few readers; so offensive is the spirit of personal acrimony which pervades its pages. But it undoubtedly produced at that time its intended effect, in depreciating the reputation of Dr. Bentley. In pursuance of this design, Dr. Hare went through the whole of Phædrus, refuting with the utmost bitterness the hasty suggestions of his adversary; to whom he dealt out a severer measure than he had himself received. Bentley had acknowledged in two or three places of Terence the merit of his rival: but he is never

commended in return, except with such grudging and niggardly praise as serves not to exalt but degrade its object. For instance, his knowledge of ancient metre is confessed to be greater than that of any one living; but his acquirements in every other department are spoken of with unbounded contempt; and that particular science, to which he is represented to have devoted all his time, is pronounced so trivial and useless, as to be unworthy the study of men of sense. Besides this acrimonious spirit, there are two particular points which the reader of Hare's *Epistola Critica* cannot fail to remark. First, he compromises his own character as a scholar, by speaking contemptuously of parts of Bentley's writings which all the learned in Europe had commended: secondly, he sacrifices his consistency to his resentment, by depreciating and abusing what he had formerly extolled to the skies. In 'The Clergyman's Thanks to Phileleutherus,' he had bestowed the most lavish panegyrics, not only upon the 'Remarks on Free-thinking,' but almost all Bentley's other writings, particularly his dissertation on Phalaris, his Emenations on Menander, and his edition of Horace; and lately in the preface to Terence, his undertaking of the New Testament was noticed with unqualified approbation. In the present publication, Hare sneers at every one of those performances with much bitterness. Nor does his spleen content itself here: he makes sarcastic allusions to Bentley's College quarrels, and his alleged neglect of the duties of his professorship. Since he knew that for the greater part of the time that he had held this office, he had been inhibited by the University from any discharge of its duties, the latter topic had better have been suppressed. The Dean, in the course of his long pamphlet, took occasion to notice a few passages of Terence, in

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

His inconsistency.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

which he felt able to make a successful stand against his rival: and at the conclusion, advertised his intention of printing a complete censure of Bentley's edition: a design which it may be doubted whether he ever seriously entertained²⁰.

Had our critic chosen to take any notice of this elaborate attack, the most effectual reply would have been, to reprint the 'Thanks to Phileleutherus.' So glaring is the inconsistency of these two pieces, that a few years after Hare's death, when his different writings were collected in four volumes, it was perceived that the republication of *both* would not be creditable to the author's reputation: accordingly the panegyric was omitted, and the *Epistola Critica* inserted in that collection. But Dr. Bentley in this, as in several other controversies, resolved to commit his literary character to be vindicated by posterity: he is reported indeed to have spoken in terms of contempt of the present attack, and to have observed of Hare, 'that he had as much pride as himself, and a great deal more ill-nature²¹.' It is recorded, on the other hand, that the bitterness of this controversy did not prevent the Dean retaining all his admiration of the learning and genius of Bentley, whom he is said to have continued almost to idolize²².

²⁰ PRELO PARANTUR, *Animadversiones in Terentium Bentleianum, Quibus præstantissimi Scriptoris textus repurgatur ab innumeris corruptelis, quibus Viri doctissimi Critica Temeritas eum commaculavit.*

²¹ This speech is mentioned by Dr. Salter, as a report at Cambridge: he himself heard Dr. Bentley observe of this piece, 'that he could not read it through, nor imagined Dr. Hare capable of writing such a book.' See his communication to Mr. John Nichols, *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1779, vol. xlix. p. 548. In the editions of the *Remarks on Free-thinking*, published after Hare had given offence to the author, the initials of the name of Phileleutherus's correspondent were altered from F. H. to N. N. In the edition of 1743, after Bentley's death, F. H. is re-instated.

²² This is the assertion of Bishop Warburton, who declares that he knew Bishop Hare well. I have met with other reasons for believing it to be true.

During the progress of the quarrel, Dr. Hare was advanced to the deanery of St. Paul's; and in about a year after, to the bishoprick of St. Asaph. A dispute between a dignitary of his rank and a professor of theology, carried on with such asperity, upon a topic so foreign to their profession, is reported to have given much scandal; and in particular, Sir Isaac Newton is said to have complained that two such divines should 'be fighting with one another about a play-book ²³.'

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Oct. 1726.

The publication of Phædrus had another unpleasant consequence—the termination of Bentley's friendship with his old correspondent Burman. This indefatigable scholar had already printed three editions of the *Fabulist*. On receiving the Cambridge publication, he was filled with amazement at the numerous and daring changes of the text, for which he laboured in vain to discover the reasons: he was as much surprised at the brevity of Bentley's notes, so widely differing from his own, and the style of imperial decree with which he ordered the adoption of his new and unsupported readings. But when Hare's *Epistola Critica* reached Holland, Burman (who knew less than might have been expected of literary anecdote among English scholars) experienced fresh astonishment at the furious attack made by the anonymous author, not only on the publications but the character of his illustrious friend. Finding however that general interest was drawn to this controversy upon Phædrus, and thinking that he had made that field his own, Burman resolved upon a new edition

Burman
publishes
Phædrus.

²³ This anecdote is told by Whiston, in his *Memoirs of Dr. Clarke*, p. 113. Bishop Warburton disbelieves it. Whiston certainly is not the best authority; but he here expressly says, that he quotes Sir Isaac's words; and it is far from being improbable that this or similar remarks should be made by Newton, and by many others, at the moment.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Rupture
between
him and
Bentley.

of the author ; which accordingly appeared, with an elaborate commentary, in 1727. The editor takes great pains in balancing the readings of Bentley and his opponent, (whose name he did not discover till the end of his work,) and in giving a fair statement of their respective merits²⁴. He added to the book a reprint of Hare's *Epistola Critica*, at the desire of his bookseller, to which he had at first made some objection. It was evident that this publication must give offence to Dr. Bentley, who not only found his positions disputed, but the attack of an exasperated adversary re-issued from the press, in such company as ensured perpetuity to an effusion which might otherwise have sunk into oblivion ; and all this done by a friend, who had been for five and twenty years past industriously courting his intimacy, and professing himself the most devoted of his admirers. Burman's preface, which is of inordinate length, and relates principally to his private feelings and grievances, makes a laboured apology for what he had done, and discovers much uneasiness at the probable termination of their friendship, which he could not but anticipate. In fact, another cause of offence, to which we find no allusion in the preface, had already occurred between these two sensitive correspondents.

Bentley's
and Bur-
man's edi-
tions of Lu-
can.

Dr. Bentley had, immediately after his restoration to his degrees, undertaken an edition of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and applied himself to the work with ardour : after the interruption occasioned by his publication of Terence and Phædrus, he reverted to that

²⁴ Phædrus was never published till towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the book was printed from a single manuscript, found by Peter Pithou, a French Protestant, who having escaped almost miraculously from the massacre of St. Bartholomew at Paris, in 1572, secured his future safety by turning Papist. The slender nature of that authority afforded a considerable latitude for conjecture in the readings of this author.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

task, and made great progress; having his notes on the three first books ready for the press, while those on the remaining seven were in considerable forwardness. He knew that his friend Burman possessed, among the other manuscripts of Nicholas Heinsius, his collations and notes upon Lucan. That scholar, who may perhaps be termed the first critic of the seventeenth century, was always held in high esteem by Bentley; and he did not hesitate to request the communication of his critical apparatus on Lucan, consisting of the collations of above twenty manuscripts, besides his own criticisms. Burman had himself entertained vague ideas of publishing an edition of Lucan, with Heinsius's notes and his own: this would probably never have been taken up in earnest, so entirely was he occupied with other undertakings; but when Bentley requested them for his own purposes, Burman, unwilling to part with a valuable treasure, could think of no other excuse but to inform his friend that he was himself engaged in an edition of Lucan; and to verify his assertion, actually betook himself to that task. Bentley was too penetrating not to discern some want of sincerity in his friend's proceeding, and the tone of his letters became altered. Burman, learning that the publication of Bentley's Lucan was postponed, thought it unnecessary to devote to that author the time which was demanded by his other literary works: and it is not improbable that each of these friends was pursuing the same game, waiting for the appearance of the other's edition, that he might immediately afterwards put forth his own, avail himself of all the good, and censure the defects of its rival. But while they were thus mutually expecting the other to take the lead, two young men actually printed independent editions of Lucan; Cortius at Leipsic, and Ouden-

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

dorp at Leyden. This was a good reason for the booksellers not liking to undertake immediately another edition, even from the hands of more celebrated critics. Burman did publish his in 1740, when he had been for fifty-two years incessantly engaged in the press; and from the account of this affair given by himself in the preface, it is plain that the breach in his friendship with Bentley is attributable to his own want of candour and explicitness. Bentley's notes upon this poet did not see the light till fourteen years after his death, when they were printed at the Strawberry Hill press, attached to the text and notes of Grotius. But, as might have been expected, the coquetry about Lucan, and the appearance of Burman's Phædrus, put a final period to the intimacy of these two scholars; which, considering how prone they both were to take offence, had continued a surprising length of time. Bentley was so much offended, that he meditated an act of retaliation, by publishing Ovid, to supersede or interfere with the voluminous edition which Burman, after twelve years' labour, ushered into the world almost at the same time as his Phædrus²⁵.

²⁵ In the manuscripts of Hearne, whose excessive hatred of Bentley originated in political feelings, is found this memorandum:

"Aug. 30, 1727. Yesterday I heard that, whereas Dr. Bentley talked much of putting out a new edition of Homer, he is now mighty warm about an edition of Ovid; for no other reason but out of spite to Peter Burman, a foreigner, who hath lately published Ovid. Thus does this poor, old, spiteful man turn all his thoughts upon revenge, and spends his time in mere trifles."

John Christopher Wolf mentions in a letter, Sept. 16, 1727, that it was expected by all persons, and by Burman among the rest, that his publication of Phædrus would be resented by Bentley; and that he was reported to be preparing animadversions upon Burman's Ovid. *La Croze, Thesaurus Epistolicus*, vol. ii. p. 115.

From a letter of Drakenborch (who was a pupil of Burman) to La Croze, it appears, that our critic's old enemy, Alexander Cunningham, had begun to write a censure of his Phædrus, but gave it up, on hearing that it was in Burman's hands. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 124.

Our critic was at this period of his life intent upon discharging all the promises which he had made, and satisfying the expectations of the learned public. Besides the authors mentioned in this Chapter, he proposed to publish in succession Manilius, the New Testament, and Homer. Such heterogeneous undertakings formed ample work for a man whose years already reached to sixty-five. Manilius, indeed, he had prepared for publication about thirty years before; but in the course of that time his opinions upon many passages must have experienced a change. His great design of the New Testament, for the execution of which he stood peculiarly pledged, it is certain, notwithstanding the universal notion of the contrary, that he had never for a moment abandoned. The celebrated Vatican manuscript, which vies in importance with the Alexandrian itself, had not yet been used for the purpose of correcting and fixing the sacred text: for we have already noticed the fallacy of the common opinion, that this was one of the copies used by the Complutensian editors. Bentley obtained accurate collations of a considerable part of this manuscript, through the agency of Philip de Stosch, a learned German baron, known by his splendid publications of antiques, who resided at Rome, secretly employed by the British government to watch the proceedings of the Pretender and his adherents. The person principally engaged in the collation was Mico, an Italian. But he received great and important assistance in this matter from his nephew, Thomas Bentley, who went abroad on a literary excursion in 1725, and continued more than a year in the examination of manuscripts at Paris, Rome, Naples, and Florence.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Perseveres
in his de-
sign of pub-
lishing the
New Testa-
ment.
Vatican ma-
nuscript.

Thomas
Bentley.

This gentleman has been already mentioned as having published, when a young man, ‘ a little

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

1713.

1718.

1724.

Horace,' with his uncle's text. Being chosen Fellow of Trinity College, he continued to devote himself to classical literature: he printed an edition of *Cicero de Finibus*, and was engaged in other learned works. He was cordially attached to his great relative; but so amiable was his disposition, that he appears to have lived on good terms with the opposite party, and is never mentioned otherwise than as a general favourite. Not entering into orders, he lost his fellowship when a Master of Arts of above seven years' standing: but was then chosen Librarian of Trinity, and took the degree of Doctor of Laws. Cumberland, in a communication to the *Biographia Britannica*, says of Bentley's projected edition of the New Testament, "He had collected and collated all the manuscripts of Europe to which access could be obtained. For this purpose his nephew, Thomas Bentley, LL.D., well known to the republic of letters, travelled through Europe at his uncle's expense²⁶." This statement, like most of that gentleman's notices of his grandfather's life, is inaccurate. Dr. Thomas Bentley's primary objects in his continental excursion were the gratification of his curiosity, and the procuring materials for literary publications of his own. He was, no doubt, solicitous to assist the views, and answer the enquiries of his uncle, at whose feet he had been brought up, and with whose careful and critical examination of manuscripts he was familiar. It appears however from his letters, that he travelled at his own charge: while at Rome he candidly explained to Dr. Bentley, that his expenses had exceeded his means, and received a present to relieve him from his embarrassment, for which he was warmly thankful. Both at Paris and at Rome

At Rome.

²⁶ Kippis, *Biograph. Brit.* vol. ii. p. 244.

he devoted much of his time to collating Greek manuscripts of Plutarch, of which author he meditated an edition, and received encouraging offers from some booksellers; but found himself unequal to the labour of so great an undertaking. Immediately on his arrival at Rome, he collated an extremely ancient manuscript of Terence on parchment, formerly belonging to Cardinal Bembo, and bearing his name: this piece of antiquity, which was one of the chief boasts of the Vatican, Dr. Thomas Bentley persuaded himself was at least 1700 years old²⁷! At all events, it is the most valuable copy of the comedian, and had formed the main foundation of Faernus's edition: he found, however, that it had not been inspected by that editor with sufficient care. He began, about Nov. 1725, with the two last acts of the *Phormio*, the sixth play, and despatched the collation to Cambridge: but even this did not reach his uncle till his edition was printed. He employed his time in the library to the best advantage, inspecting and making extracts from other parts of their treasures; but the short period that strangers were allowed to remain daily in the Vatican, and the number of holidays on which it was closed, made it impossible to effect as great a progress as at Paris, where every possible facility was afforded to a stranger by the liberality of the French scholars, and where he was received by the Abbé Bignon, Father Montfaucon, and others, with the kindness ensured by the name of his illustrious uncle. Dr. Bentley, however, did

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

²⁷ "I am really of opinion that the Codex Bembinus is as old as J. Cæsar, or Augustus, or Tiberius at least; and I have got that notion from many marks, particularly the way of writing and spelling I have observed in the inscriptions I have read up and down of that age: this book has the same; but when you come to Vespasian and Septim. Severus and Constantine, they are very different." *Letter from Rome*, about December, 1725.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

not find the agency of his nephew as valuable as that of Mr. John Walker had proved ; not owing to any deficiency of his learning or zeal, but because he did not enjoy a state of health adequate to long and laborious employments. His letters, written from Paris and Rome, are on many accounts highly interesting : they display an open and ingenuous character, and show not only the devoted attachment, but the profound deference with which he regarded the attainments and person of his uncle ²².

Election of
Public Ora-
tor.

In the early part of 1727, Dr. Bentley engaged in the last acknowledged controversy of his pen ; the subject being a dispute upon a point of academical law, arising from the following incident. Dr. Ayloffe resigning the office of Public Orator, which he had filled for thirty-one years, the election of a successor took place in the ordinary method : the Heads of Colleges nominating two of the candidates, of whom the Senate at large were to choose one. But at the nomination, Mr. Heyrick of Trinity, and Mr. Banyer of Emanuel College, had an equal number of suffrages : whereupon the point was referred, by direction of the statutes, to Dr. Bentley, as Regius Pro-

²² These letters refer to all the topics which Dr. Thomas Bentley thought likely to amuse the Cambridge Aristarchus : politics are not forgotten. The following scraps of news he sends from Rome, where then resided a personage whose fortunes excited much interest :

Rome, Nov. 16, 1725. " All the news here is, that the Princess Sobieski went into a nunnery three or four nights ago ; some say upon a quarrel about the Lady Inverness, who lives in the family with them ; others, that he (i.e. the Pretender) has put a protestant tutor to his son, and that she can't bear that. There's no writing any thing, for they open letters both at Rome and at London. I have seen him : he has not *είδος αξιον τυράννου*."

Another letter from Rome, without date : it seems December, 1725. " The Pretender's Lady is still in the nunnery. He is generally blamed. They tell me the Pope has refused him audience three times."

April 24, 1726. " The Chevalier went from Rome yesterday ; but whither, is a great speculation. Duke Wharton has been here incog."

fessor of Divinity : he decided in favour of Heyrick, who accordingly was returned, along with Mr. Castle of Corpus Christi; and the Senate on the following day elected Castle. But a fourth candidate, Mr. Burford, Fellow of King's, protested publicly against the whole of these proceedings, by which he conceived himself to be unjustly excluded from a fair competition. He was joined by a large party in asserting that nomination by the Heads, a method prescribed by the statutes of Queen Elizabeth, was not legally applicable to the case of the Public oratorship; that this office, having been founded long before her reign, was subject to the regulations of the *Statuta Antiqua*, an ancient code, whose injunctions were still in force when not expressly repealed by the Queen's statutes. By those ancient laws, the Orator was to be chosen in an open election : and Burford contended that, notwithstanding recent custom, the same method ought still to be adopted. Dr. Bentley, as senior of the Heads, undertook to maintain the authority and privileges of his order : he declared himself astonished at the objections made to the proceedings, and expressed a wish to see by what arguments they could be supported. Burford no sooner heard of this challenge than he wrote an 'Argument' to prove that the old statutes of the University remained in force in all points except where expressly repealed by those of Queen Elizabeth; and that they had received confirmation by a clause in the latter code. Bentley immediately took up the contest, and printed an 'Answer to the Argument,' confuting each paragraph, and maintaining, in a high tone and with keen sarcasm, that the old statutes (which had originally been graces of the Senate) were obsolete and abrogated. In this piece, which seems only printed for circulation among the Senate, the Doctor treats Burford and his

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Bentley's
controversy
with Bur-
ford respect-
ing the old
statutes.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

friends in an unceremonious and supercilious style, not justified by the occasion. The contest, indeed, was unequal: not to mention the risk which a novice in controversy must run when he encounters an experienced combatant, the two antagonists approached the question under very different circumstances. Burford was master only of the common and popular arguments bandied about by his party. Bentley happened to have had occasion thoroughly to consider this subject, and exert all the powers of his mind in upholding the contrary opinion: during the affair of his Degradation, his adversaries, when hard pushed to defend their proceedings, had advanced some passages from the old statutes. Thereupon it became an object of importance to Bentley to impugn the authority of these ancient enactments: he came, therefore, to the combat ready prepared at all points. His Answer exhibits all the characteristics which we have noticed in his former controversial pieces: it is luminous in its statements, pungent in its arguments, and overpowering in its conclusions. Nevertheless, the question was not set at rest by this veteran champion of the Heads. Burford, after having studied the case, and discovered the weak parts of Bentley's Answer, wrote a powerful Reply: in which piece he seems to have been assisted with materials and suggestions by other members of the University; and I think we may in some places detect the hand of Dr. Colbatch, whose aid was never wanting, when a stand was to be made against his great enemy. This Reply succeeds in oversetting some particulars of Bentley's tract, though it does not satisfactorily establish the claim which gave birth to the dispute, that the appointment of an Orator ought to be by open election. The particulars of the discussion are of too local a nature to lay before the reader; they

would not even interest members of the University, except at a moment when they happened to be in controversy. Burford's Reply, which was unanswered, must be acknowledged to have left him in possession of the field; and so it appears to have been felt by the University: for at a subsequent period, the collection of *Statuta Antiqua* was printed by authority for the use of official persons, in the same volume with the statutes received from the Crown; and was deemed to be a sort of common-law, operative in cases where the later enactments were silent.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

At the moment of which we are speaking, England March 20. was deprived of its brightest ornament, by the death of Sir Isaac Newton. Dr. Bentley continued to the last on terms of familiar intercourse with his illustrious friend; and upon his death suggested the following epitaph to be inscribed upon his monument in Westminster Abbey:

Hic quiescant ossa et pulvis
ISAACI NEWTONI.
Si quæris, quis et qualis fuerit,
Abi:
Sin ex ipso nomine reliqua novisti,
Siste paulisper,
Et mortale illud Philosophiæ numen
Grata mente venerare ²⁹.

Epitaph on
Sir Isaac
Newton.

Notwithstanding the robust constitution of Dr. Bentley, he had a liability to catch severe colds, owing to the recluse habits in which he had of late years indulged. It was observed that they were commonly brought on by sitting as moderator in the Divinity Schools; and accordingly he was forbidden by medical advice to expose himself any longer to the danger of these repeated attacks. This advice was particularly urged by Dr. Wallis, a young physi-

Bentley appoints a deputy in the Schools.

²⁹ Nichols's *Illustrations of Literature*, vol. iv. p. 18.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

cian, who practised at Cambridge from 1725 to 1729, and during that time was a daily visitor at Trinity Lodge, and retained a great friendship for the Master till his death³⁰. It was in the early part of 1727 that he resigned his professional functions in the Schools, and constituted as his deputy Dr. Newcome, of St. John's College, who was about the same time elected to the station of Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity³¹.

For the same reason Dr. Bentley gave up his practice of presiding in the Hall at the College festivals: and he scarcely ever afterwards administered the sacrament in the Chapel; a ceremony which he had hitherto performed in a manner described to have been peculiarly dignified and impressive.

Trinity Col-
lege.

It is now a long time since we adverted to the affairs of Trinity College: the transactions during the interval are of no great moment, and are such as we cannot feel any satisfaction in recording; nevertheless it is requisite to explain the origin and progress of those strange occurrences which mark the concluding years of Dr. Bentley's eventful life. His triumphant restoration to his degrees, and the discomfiture experienced by all his adversaries, had greatly cooled the ardour of those who had formed the regular opposition to his College government.

³⁰ Thomas Wallis, Fellow of Magdalene College, was M.B. 1720, M.D. 1725. After leaving Cambridge he established himself in practice at Stamford.

³¹ Newcome was one of the seven doctors whom Bentley created, on the occasion when he delivered his commencement speech, published along with his Terence. This gentleman, who became afterwards Master of St. John's College, and Dean of Rochester, passed an academical life of extraordinary length. He was a student of his College in the year 1700, and he continued to reside within its walls in the memory of persons still living in the University. Cole says in his MSS. that Dr. Newcome acquitted himself in the Divinity Schools 'with tolerable ability;' this faint praise seems intended as a sneer at the Deputy Professor, who being a zealous Whig, was an object of Cole's dislike.

Dr. Colbatch, although never deterred by fatigue or danger from the pursuit of his great object, deemed all interference at present useless, and withdrew to his rectory of Orwell, deploring the ill-success of his long and painful efforts to procure a visitation, and watching anxiously for an opportunity to recommence operations³². A favourable occasion seemed to present itself by the death of Bishop Fleetwood, and translation of Bishop Greene from the diocese of Norwich to that of Ely. The former prelate had continued firm and immovable in his resolution never to suffer himself to be troubled with the affairs of Trinity College. The new Bishop having been for many years Master of Corpus Christi College, and possessing an intimate knowledge of academical matters, was better qualified to exercise jurisdiction in case of a College appeal, than either of his predecessors. But although he listened to Colbatch's statements of the condition of the society, yet such was the terror spread by Bentley's uniform success over every person who had placed himself in his path, that he held out no hope of any interference, until the validity of his jurisdiction over Trinity College was established.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Dr. Greene,
Bishop of
Ely, 1723.

In the mean time all the Master's wishes and projects were effected without obstruction. On the death of Mr. Modd, his devoted and unscrupulous agent, Dr. Baker was made Vice-master; and in that capacity furthered all his measures, and directed all the departments of the College with a regard to nothing except his sovereign will and pleasure³³. Mr. R.

Sept. 1772.

³² During this period Dr. Colbatch employed himself in writing a very able and interesting tract on Church and College Leases.

³³ Mr. Modd had continued, like his predecessor, Dr. Lynnet, to attend morning prayers in the Chapel, daily, at six o'clock, till past the age of fourscore.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Opposition
to the Mas-
ter at an
end.

Walker was an equally active adherent; and being more popular in manners and character than Baker, appears to have had great success in conciliating the minds of his brethren. Some Fellows who had hitherto been of the opposite party, finding that further resistance was likely to have no result, except to destroy their own interest and comfort, deserted their colours, and joined the ruling powers; in particular, Craister and Paris, both men of ability, who have been distinguished in this history by severe marks of Bentley's resentment, now found it expedient to forget their grievances and fall in with all his measures and projects.

His son
chosen Fel-
low.

At the election of Fellows in 1723, the Master's son, Richard Bentley, was chosen, although a junior bachelor, and only fifteen years of age. This appears a culpable instance of partiality, which it is difficult even to palliate. He was indeed a youth of blameless character and admirable capacity, and would probably, at a proper period, have well deserved the station. But this was a solitary instance, during the forty-two years of Dr. Bentley's mastership, in which any person was permitted even to be a candidate before the third year of his bachelorship³⁴. It is not

³⁴ The practice of former times respecting the election of Fellows of Trinity being misunderstood, even in the Society itself, it will not be amiss to give a distinct statement of its different variations. The statutes only prescribe, that the persons chosen must be under the standing of Master of Arts. From the date of the statutes, 1560, to the year 1667, the Fellows were chosen promiscuously from the three years of Bachelors: but it is to be observed, that although the elections were sometimes held annually, they were more commonly biennial, or triennial. It was in 1667, the year made for ever memorable in College annals by the admission of *Sir Isaac Newton* to a fellowship, that the candidates were first confined to the third year of Bachelors. This continued the practice in all subsequent years, with two or three exceptions, till 1752, (the election described in *Cumberland's Memoirs*, p. 96.) when the Middle Bachelors were admitted to the competition; as they have been every year since that time. At the elections in 1771, 1772, and 1782, the Junior Bachelors also

easy to account for Bentley's resolution of forcing this youth at so premature an age into the society and equality of men ; particularly as he was not brought up to any profession. About five years afterwards, he nominated him to one of the two lay-fellowships, which became vacant by the death of Dr. Ayloffe.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

The Master's attention to the interests of his own relations led him to other acts which excited much greater clamour. But in no instance was his character more assailed with invective, than for the disposal of a College estate, in the city of York, called Massam House. This property, consisting of several tenements in Petergate, had been leased in the year 1696, for a very small fine ; and the lessee, under promise from the then Master, Dr. Montague, that the lease should be renewed in seven years for the same consideration, expended 4 or 500*l.* in the repairs and improvement of the premises : but when he applied at the usual time for a renewal, Dr. Bentley positively refused to accept the same terms ; alleging that they were unreasonably small, and that he was not bound by the engagements of his predecessor. In 1716 the whole term of the lease expired ; but the tenant fancied he could still retain possession ; and having some acquaintance with the Doctor's elder brother, Mr. James Bentley, desired him to inspect the premises and the improvements which he had made. The result was very different from his expectations : that gentleman fixed his own affections upon the property ; and accordingly, in the following year, the Master proposed to the Seni-

Lease of
Massam
House.

were suffered to be candidates ; and one of that standing was chosen in each of those years ; viz. *Rogerson Cotter*, *Thomas Robinson*, and *Richard Porson*. Thirty-seven years afterwards, in 1819, the custom was once more revived, and *Connop Thirlwall* was elected, being then a Junior Bachelor.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

ority, to grant his brother a new lease for twenty years of Massam House, upon his paying a fine of 40*l.*, a sum which hardly exceeded one year's clear value. The former proprietor attempted resistance, raised much outcry in the neighbourhood, and filed a bill in Chancery to compel the performance of Dr. Montague's promise on the part of the College. The Chancery proceedings availed him nothing; but the scandal hit the Master very severely. Middleton, in his pamphlet on the government of the College, works up this story, heightened by some additional insinuations, into a most black charge against the Doctor³⁵. Ten years afterwards the lease was renewed to Priscilla Bentley, his brother's widow, for twenty years, upon a fine of 20*l.* In both cases the pecuniary considerations were much smaller than the Society were entitled to receive; and thus a sacrifice was indisputably made to benefit the relatives of their Master.

Bentley retained his conviction that the headship was not in possession of so large a proportion of the College income as the foundation had destined for it; and though he judged it inexpedient to revive his old projects of reform on this subject, yet he was incessantly on the watch to indemnify himself for what he considered a deficiency in his just emoluments. In the mode of doing this it must be confessed that he was not always very nice. He fitted up at the College expense the room over the Queen's Gate, and then increased the rent, which was one of those payable to the Master; and, what was a still greater outrage, he destroyed the architectural propriety of the building, by inserting two modern sash-windows in that apartment. He ordered a cow-

³⁵ *Middleton's Works*, vol. iii. p. 755.

house and two coach-houses to be built in the stable-yard ; reserving the first for his own purpose, and receiving rent from those who were accommodated with the latter : and he over-ruled, with a high hand, the scruples of Edward Vernon, the junior bursar, who hesitated to pay the bills of these works, as not having been authorized by the Seniority.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

The south meadow in the College walks had always been considered as appropriated to the horses of the Senior Fellows. In 1720 the Master requested permission to rent this land for the pasture of his own cows : having, as he said, been accustomed to a milk diet in his childhood, he argued that the same regimen would suit his constitution in old age. The obsequious Seniors, happy to oblige their lord by every sacrifice, public or private, gave him their land for a rent of forty shillings (although worth four times that sum), and it was immediately hedged, diked, and drained, at the public cost.

The south meadows.

This miserable transaction appears to have led the way to another of greater magnitude. The rent of the meadow was expended in an annual fishing-party at Over, a village about six miles from Cambridge, where the College has a rectorial estate. This is the only out-door amusement in which I find it recorded that Bentley ever partook ; and he was sufficiently pleased with the place, although bordering on the fens, to form the idea of building there a country-house, or summer residence, for himself and his family. Being now in the plenitude of power, he could at once have carried his measure into effect by the mere *fiat* of authority ; but he seems to have had misgivings and apprehensions of being some time called to account for such an application of College money, and adopted an artifice to disguise his plans. The old house upon the farm wanting repair,

Bentley builds a country-house at Over.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

he ordered an estimate to be made of the sum requisite for putting it into a proper state ; designing to prove that a new house might be erected for little more than that expense. But the workmen, contrary to his expectations, found it strong and substantial, and undertook to put it into a perfect state of repair for 214*l*. His scheme, however, was not abandoned : he proposed to the Seniority to rebuild the house : whereupon Baker and Walker entering into the Master's views, seconded the proposal, and urged the expediency of building a very good one ; as it might prove an occasional accommodation to some of the society, who happened to serve the curacy. Accordingly, a new mansion was ordered to be erected with bricks and sash-windows. The pretended object, however, deceived nobody : the plans of the house and rooms were supplied, and the work directed, by Dr. Bentley himself ; the bricks were of the best quality, brought by land-carriage from a distance beyond London ; workmen were sent for from London ; the whole house was wainscotted ; a chimney was constructed according to a peculiar notion of his own, having a window behind it, that he might have light for reading while he sat by the fire : nor could any one doubt but that it was destined for his own use. It was finished in the summer of 1727, at an expense of little less than 1000*l*. : but circumstances intervened to prevent his ever occupying this villa.

In 1726 the composition allowed to the Master for his three horses was increased to 100*l*. from 60*l*., the sum fixed in Dr. Barrow's time, half a century before. It is more satisfactory to record, that in this year Dr. Bentley completed the internal fitting and decoration of the Chapel, and erected the present noble repeating clock, the present dial, and the

three large bells. These improvements gave occasion to the only piece of courtesy which seems for many years to have passed between the Master and Dr. Colbatch. Bentley offered his enemy the old College clock for his church at Orwell; and with consideration and delicacy, made the tender through the medium of Colbatch's friend, Dr. Ayloffe.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

The elections to fellowships continued to be what we have already described, the authoritative appointments of the Master. Had this patronage been regular and legal, it is certain that the mode in which he generally bestowed it would have redounded to his honour. There were admitted into the society a great number of excellent scholars, whose subsequent distinction in the University and the world justified their claims to that reward, although the power which gave it might be irregular and unconstitutional³⁶. Exceptions, however, there cer-

The Master's nomination of Fellows.

³⁶ Within about ten years from 1718, besides many persons whose academical character will be noticed in this history, the following Fellows of Trinity were admitted by Dr. Bentley: *Thomas Robinson*, afterwards Secretary of State and the first Lord Grantham; *Vincent Bourne*, the unrivalled Latin poet; *William Barnard*, Bishop of Raphoe and of Derry; *Mark Hildesley*, the celebrated Bishop of Sodor and Man; *Walter Titley*, an accomplished scholar, many years British Minister at the court of Denmark; *Thomas Clarke*, who was Master of the Rolls from 1754 to 1764; and *Thomas Newton*, who became Bishop of Bristol and Dean of St. Paul's, and is universally known as the editor of Milton, and author of the Dissertation on the Prophecies. To this list I shall add the names of three of their brethren, elected Fellows within the same period, who were distinguished in the humbler but not less useful capacity of schoolmasters: *Benjamin Wilson*, Master of Wakefield School, who bore the reputation of one of the best Greek scholars of his age; *Timothy Crumpe*, High Master of St. Paul's; and *John Clarke*, successively Master of Shipton, Beverley, and Wakefield Schools, of whom an interesting Memoir has been published by the late Dr. Zouch, himself one of his pupils, under the emphatic title of "*The Good Schoolmaster, exemplified in the Character of the Rev. John Clarke, M.A. formerly Fellow of Trinity College, &c.*" 1768. This piece is reprinted in Nichols's *Illustrations of Literature*, vol. i. p. 745.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Rejection
of Benjamin
Stillingfleet.

tainly were; and the election of 1726 is stated to have militated with every good principle. Benjamin Stillingfleet, grandson of Bentley's great patron, being left an orphan by his father, the Bishop's eldest son, was sent as a sizar to Trinity, in confidence that the Master would, by his patronage of this young man, show his gratitude to his ancestor. Stillingfleet was candidate for a fellowship at this election; and his reputation for scholarship, added to the consideration of his family, made every one conclude his success to be certain. But, whatever might be the reason, he was rejected, while four persons, commonly deemed his inferiors in merit, were successful; two of them being pre-elected for the following year, according to that irregular custom, which Dr. Bentley now made no scruple of adopting. One of these was Andrew Hacket, who, as heir to a large estate, ought to have been excluded; but he was related to the senior Fellow, who was perpetually extorting some reward for his support of the Master's measures. Stillingfleet deeply and bitterly resented his failure, and continued throughout life to complain of the Master's cruelty and ingratitude. His attainments as a naturalist and man of elegant literature have given him much celebrity, and he has been the means of affixing a great portion of obloquy on Bentley's character. I gather from Colbatch's papers that, in point of scholarship, he was really superior to some of his successful competitors; what were the motives which led the Master to reject him, we have no means of determining: he is reported to have said on the occasion, that 'Mr. Stillingfleet was too fine a gentleman to be buried in a College.' Certain it is that I find no other instance in the course of a long and active life, in which

there is any pretence for charging the Doctor with ingratitude³⁷.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

The public outcry caused by this College election, excited hopes in the mind of Dr. Colbatch, and made him think this a favourable moment for renewing his efforts to bring the Master to account. The learned and eminent Bishop Gibson now filled the see of London; and his great judgment and knowledge, as well as his exalted station, gave him the principal voice and influence in ecclesiastical affairs. Colbatch took occasion to address that great prelate on the state of the College: his immediate object was to represent the unfitness of a candidate for Priest's Orders, who had applied to the Bishop with letters testimonial from the Master and eight Fellows; and to inform him of the culpable facility with which such certificates were commonly signed: a mischievous negligence, injurious to the best interests of the Church, which was, however, chargeable upon the College officers rather than upon the Head. He proceeded to acquaint his Lordship with the wretched state in which the society then was, and must continue to be, without the interference of a Visitor; and craved his interest and assistance in effecting an object so important to the Church as the restoration of this great College. Bishop Gibson hesitated not to declare, publicly and privately, that he considered it a shame and scandal to the Government, that the complaints of Trinity College should have experienced such long neglect, and that no redress could be obtained; while in every other case the laws had provided a remedy.

³⁷ Much is said on the subject of this rejection, in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 336; and in Coxe's *Life of Benjamin Stillingfleet*, published in 1811. Mr. Coxe's notion that his hero was excluded to make room for Bentley's own son is utterly erroneous: the latter had at this time been in possession of his fellowship three years.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

He did not, indeed, promise any assistance, except that, in case a petition were offered to the King in Council, he would attend the Board, and give his best consideration to the case: and he advised that such a petition should be presented by a respectable number of the fellows. This was now hardly practicable; as experience had shown them that such a measure had no effect except to bring vexation and loss upon themselves. The Bishop of London threw out a suggestion of another kind; that he thought the Bishop of Ely might proceed to act as Visitor under the statutes, and leave it to the Master to dispute his authority, if he pleased, by moving for a prohibition in the Courts of Westminster: this opinion, when communicated to the latter prelate, appears to have had great influence upon his conduct.

Claims of
Westmin-
ster School.

Dr. Colbatch endeavoured also to obtain for his cause the powerful assistance of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, as guardians of Westminster School. We have more than once had occasion to notice the connexion of that school with Trinity College. Queen Elizabeth's statutes had given to the pupils from Westminster no greater advantage over others, than a preference in elections to scholarships. But in the fifth year of James I. the governors of the school had interest enough to obtain letters-patent from the Crown, enjoining the College to elect the Westminster scholars to fellowships every year, in preference to all other candidates, (provided they were not exceptionable in learning or morals), and in order to make sure of their success, decreed that they should continue eligible two years after the degree of M.A.; whereas others are superannuated at that standing. It is obvious that the effect of such an ordinance would have been shortly to throw all the fellowships and all the preferment of the College into the hands of West-

minster men, and to destroy the objects of this liberal establishment, by making it ever afterwards an appendage to another seminary of later foundation. At that period it was neither usual nor safe to contest the validity of Royal commands : nevertheless, the Master and Fellows did resist a mandate, which could not have been received without the violation of their duty, and the subversion of the statutes which they were sworn to maintain. After some angry discussion between the College and the School, a composition was entered into, under the mediation of Archbishop Bancroft ; by which it was settled that three scholars should be taken from Westminster every year, and that they should never be prejudiced by pre-elections ; and, on the other hand, that the King's letters-patent should never be urged upon the College. By a subsequent letter of James I., which was accepted by the College, the above agreement is enforced, and the Westminster-elect have the privilege of seniority over the other scholars of their year. This arrangement appears to have continued for more than a century, without dispute or complaint : the connexion was mutually beneficial to the two institutions ; and many of the most distinguished of the Fellows were those chosen from the ' Westminster Scholars Elect.'—Bishop Atterbury being Dean, had lately found out the old letters-patent of James I., and attempted to establish their validity : but his essay was treated by Dr. Bentley with derision, and seems to have been carried no further³⁸. It happened that at the last

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

³⁸ It is reported that when the Bishop mentioned the existence of these Royal Letters, and alleged that they were given *Anno Quinto Jacobi Primi*, Bentley replied to this effect : "They would have had more weight in your Lordship's favour had they been *Anno Primo Jacobi Tertii*:" a keen repartee, if we recollect that Atterbury was believed at that time to be anxiously devoted to the cause of the Pretender. The anecdote is told in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1773, vol. xliii. p. 499, by an anonymous writer, who misapprehends the occasion, and spoils the force of the jest.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

Jan. 16.

Jan. 1, 1727.
Dean and
Chapter so-
licitated to in-
terfere.

election of Fellows, no Westminster scholar had been chosen, though one of them was generally deemed superior in merit to some of the successful candidates. Surprise and dissatisfaction being hereby excited among Westminster men, an idea struck Colbatch that it might be possible to make the guardians of the school the instruments of bringing on a visitation of the College. Being encouraged in this plan by the Earl of Oxford, who was his neighbour in the country, as well as by Dr. Middleton, he set off to town, resolving, with constitutional ardour, to leave nothing untried which might contribute to this object. His view was to induce the Dean and Chapter to become themselves petitioners to the King for the establishment of a visitatorial power over the College, preparatory to laying before the Visitor the complaints of the Westminster Scholars. This was to be backed by a petition from some Fellows of the House, who might be encouraged to come forward by such an example. If this point was carried, and the Visitor once ascertained, the whole grievances of the College were immediately to be submitted to his cognizance. About the letters-patent of James I. Colbatch took no other interest than as a pretext for effecting the first step towards Dr. Bentley's overthrow: indeed it would not have been consistent with his principles to desire their enforcement. As soon as he propounded the subject at Westminster, he met with considerable encouragement. Dr. Robert Freind, the Master, entered warmly into a scheme which promised to bring such a rich endowment to his school. Several members of the Chapter, when solicited by these two Doctors, concurred in the propriety of asserting the supposed rights of their scholars; and all agreed that there never could be a better opportunity for an attack upon Dr. Bentley than while he lay under general

odium for the late election. The persons educated at the school being met to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's anniversary, the general interest in this design was publicly testified. After dinner, when, in the regular order of toasts, 'Trinity College' was proposed, it was drunk throughout the Hall in the form of 'Restoration to Trinity College,' with the addition of 'the health of Dr. Colbatch³⁹.'

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

The scheme was, that the aggrieved candidate should first memorialize the Dean and Chapter; whereupon they were to present their petition at the Council Board. There was no hope of the favour of persons in power; but Colbatch engaged Dean Sherlock and Dean Hare to use their interest with Lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole, that they would not interfere, but suffer the matter to take its course. When the subject, however, was agitated in the Chapter, Bishop Bradford, the Dean, objected to take any step before they had communicated to the Master of Trinity the claims of the School, grounded upon King James's letters-patent, and enquired what he had to allege against them. Accordingly he wrote a letter of such purport to Dr. Bentley, his old intimate and ally in the University. The Master, who was accurately apprized of the meditated designs, now found himself assailed on a ground which he was ready and desirous to defend. He knew that the King's letters, never having been accepted by the College, were invalid: he had, during his Mastership, admitted to fellowships a full proportion of the Westminster scholars; and he foresaw, that in resisting the revival

Bentley exposes the invalidity of their pretensions.

³⁹ The toast having been forwarded in these words first by the Earl of Oxford, and afterwards by Mr. Shippen, the leader of the Jacobite party in the House of Commons, (himself an old Westminster-scholar at Trinity,) Bentley's friends contrived to circulate a report that it was intended to apply to another sort of *restoration*.

CHAP.
XVII.
1727.

March 5,
1726-27.

March 13,
1726-27.

of an obsolete claim which tended to make Trinity a close College, he should have the feelings and wishes of every disinterested person in his favour. Accordingly, on the receipt of the Dean's letter, intimating the proposed appeal, the Master replied in a confident and indignant tone, denying the assumed validity of the letters of James I., inasmuch as they had never been accepted by the College, and returning an unequivocal defiance to the menaces which were implied ⁴⁰. He next summoned his Seniority, who agreed unanimously to support him in a resistance to the threatened appeal, and resolved that 'the College would defend itself and the honour of their predecessors at the public charge.' He presently went to town to take measures for meeting the storm. His letter, however, appears to have convinced the Dean and Chapter that the establishment of their point in favour of the scholars was impracticable; the lawyers who were consulted gave them no encouragement to proceed; and although Colbatch and Freind took great pains in canvassing the members of the Chapter, it may well be supposed that the Bishop of Rochester would not be forward in lending himself as an instrument in the hands of those who only calculated on ulterior proceedings, which aimed at the ruin of his ancient confederate.

⁴⁰ This epistle is preserved at Westminster, where it has been shown to me by the kindness of the Very Rev. Dr. Ireland, the Dean.

CHAPTER XVIII.

General election—New members chosen by the University of Cambridge—Fresh attempts to procure a visitation of Trinity College—Opinions of five leading counsel on the question—King George II. visits the University—Claim to fees determined by the Chancellor—Bentley creates fifty-eight doctors—Entertains the King in his College—His dangerous illness—Marriage of his daughter Joanna—Scheme for prosecuting the Master—Parne—Mason—Johnson—Bentley anticipates his prosecutors—Petition to the King—College meeting—Commissary Greaves—Petition of the Bishop of Ely—Bentley writes a pamphlet on the case—Colbatch's reply—The Privy Council decline all interference—Bentley's dispute with Archbishop Wake on the Library-keeper's place—Decided by the Attorney General—Johnson promoter of the suit against Bentley—Edward Smith—Bentley's expenses paid by the College—Bishop Greene cites Dr. Bentley—Application to the Court of King's Bench for a prohibition—Proceedings of the Court—Nature of the articles—Bentley appears at Ely House—His objections—Second application to King's Bench—Resumes his edition of the New Testament—Causes of its not being published—Rule for a prohibition made absolute—Progress of a new mode of action—Bentley refuses an offer of the deanery of Lincoln—New Senate House—Contest for Vice-chancellorship—King's books placed in the old Senate House—Taylor's music-speech—Internal state of Trinity College—Vindictive measures against the prosecutors—Court of King's Bench overrule Bentley's pleas—Continue the prohibition on Bishop Greene.

THE death of King George the First, and consequent dissolution of Parliament in the summer of 1727, involved the University of Cambridge in another political struggle of considerable interest. At the last General Election in 1721, the Tory representatives, Mr. Windsor and Mr. Willoughby, had been re-elected: but on the present occasion a great and successful effort was made to supplant them. Their opponents were the Hon. Edward Finch, brother of the

CHAP.
XVIII.
1727.

June 11.
General
Election.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1727.

New mem-
bers chosen
by the Uni-
versity of
Cambridge.
Aug. 22.

late candidate, and the Hon. Thomas Townshend, second son of the Minister: had these young men stood upon their separate interests, it is probable that neither of them would have succeeded: but a coalition was effected between them. The Master of Trinity, who had possessed himself of great influence, gave them his active and strenuous support. Mr. Windsor, however, who had represented the University for 22 years, maintained a vigorous though ineffectual resistance. The numbers at the poll were, for Finch, 221—Townshend, 198—Windsor, 176¹. The new members were sons of two noblemen, who enjoyed the greatest popularity at Cambridge of all public characters in the kingdom; Lord Nottingham having proved himself for above forty years the most zealous and conscientious supporter of religion and the Church, and Lord Townshend having benefited the University in a more signal degree than had been done for centuries by any person in power. However, as the gratitude of the Senate to those personages was accompanied by an abandonment of their representative, an old fellow of a College, who had served them so many years without change of principles or any other blemish, I must consider this to be the least creditable transaction with which our *Alma Mater* can be charged. She did indeed redeem her credit for consistency, by the exemplary fidelity with which she adhered to the two members now elected, who were returned together without interruption as joint representatives for the University between forty and fifty

¹ This is the earliest University poll that I have ever met with in print. The Cambridge reader may be interested in seeing how the votes in the two great Colleges were disposed of:

	Trinity.	St. John's.
Hon. Edward Finch, Trinity	- - - 43	- - 26
Hon. Thomas Townshend, Clare Hall	- 39	- - 23
Hon. Dixie Windsor, Trinity	- - - 17	- - 36

years: an instance which, perhaps, can hardly be paralleled in the annals of the House of Commons. The result of this election was considered by all parties as materially owing to the influence and exertions of Dr. Bentley: his interest with the ruling powers was consequently strengthened; and the prospect of his opponents in Trinity College obtaining a visitation through Royal interference became more hopeless than ever.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1727.

Dr. Colbatch's recent endeavours to procure a Visitor, as described in our last chapter, had succeeded in once more arresting public attention; and the hardship of the members of the College having no court of appeal, or avenue to redress, was much canvassed. Doubts were expressed among legal men about the soundness of the opinion given by Queen Anne's lawyers in 1712, which held that the general visitatorial power had been taken away from the Bishop of Ely by Queen Elizabeth's statutes, and transferred to the Crown: it was thought that this opinion, although subscribed by so many eminent names, did in reality emanate from Sir Edward Northey; and they preferred the judgment of Sir Joseph Jekyll, who dissented from the rest, and held that the Bishop's original appointment as Visitor had never been revoked, but was expressly recognized by the code of Elizabeth. A ready and confidential communication was maintained between Colbatch and Ely-House, through the intervention of the Bishop's secretary, Mr. Francis Say; who was himself a Trinity man, and entered zealously into the views of the Master's enemies. At length the prelate pledged himself, that if the opinions of counsel should declare him possessed of sufficient jurisdiction, and if he were indemnified in respect to all expenses of the proceedings, he would take upon himself to hear the com-

Fresh attempts to procure a Visitation of Trinity College.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1727.

Opinions of
five leading
Counsel on
the ques-
tion.

plaints of the Fellows, and administer impartial justice to the College.

Accordingly in the latter part of 1727, a set of particular and searching queries relative to the claims of the Bishop of Ely, the validity of the statutes of Edward VI. and other matters regarding the question, were proposed to two eminent civilians, Dr. Henchman and Dr. Audely, and three of the first common-lawyers, Sir Philip Yorke, Sir John Cheshire, and Mr. Reeves : and in order to obtain their unbiassed opinions, they were proposed to each separately. All the five concurred in pronouncing that King Edward's statute *De Visitatore* was still in force ; that in virtue of its provisions the Bishop of Ely continued Visitor of Trinity College, and was enabled to hold a general visitation every three years ; and that the 40th statute of Elizabeth was corroborative of the former, containing only directions for proceedings in the particular case of complaints against the Head. Upon minor points there were some shades of difference, though none of importance, except that the Attorney General, whose occupations prevented his looking at the case till long after the others, and perhaps from bestowing on it the same attentive consideration, held that the Bishop was only empowered to hear the complaints under Queen Elizabeth's 40th statute (*De Magistro Amovendo*) in the course of his triennial visitation : a notion which does not appear to have been entertained by any other lawyer, in the endless discussions on this much agitated question. But before this last opinion was given, circumstances were near rendering the meditated proceeding unnecessary.

April 30,
1728.

King George
the Second
visits the
University.

King George the Second having announced his intention of visiting his University of Cambridge, great preparations were made for his reception. His

Majesty reached Newmarket on the 23d of April. The Vice-chancellor, Dr. Lambert, Master of St. John's, went over on the morrow, accompanied by the Heads, to entreat his presence; which invitation he accepted for the following day. As the approach of this august visit recalled to every one's recollection the disputes which ensued on the last occasion of a similar honour, precautions were taken to obviate such misunderstanding on the present. The Duke of Somerset issued a mandate, as Chancellor of the University, settling the amount of the fees to be received by the Regius Professors for creating doctors at the Royal Commencement: that of the Divinity Professor was *two guineas*, besides his broad-piece ².

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

Claim to
fees deter-
mined by
the Chan-
cellor.

The amount fixed was evidently designed as a compromise between the opposite opinions in the old dispute; but the principle of an extraordinary demand being recognized by authority, it cannot be denied that the final victory in the controversy rested with Dr. Bentley.

His Majesty came attended by a noble retinue, ^{April 25.} among whom were no less than seven dukes: being met by the Mayor and Corporation on horseback before he reached the town, he was conducted across Christ-College Piece to the entrance of Cambridge by Emmanuel; from which College to the Schools he passed through two continued lines of the younger academics, who were drawn up for his reception. At the Regents' Walk he was greeted by the dignitaries of the University, addressed in a speech by the Chancellor, and another by the Public-orator, and then conducted to the Regent-house. Here the *Regia Comitia* were celebrated: and at this time, the last occasion that the University has been honoured

² The Chancellor's Decree, dated Newmarket, April 25, 1728, is printed in *Wall's Ceremonies of the University*, p. 334.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

Bentley
creates fifty-
eight Doc-
tors.

Entertains
the King in
his College.

with the presence of its Monarch, doctors' and other degrees were conferred by the Royal mandate with unprecedented liberality: the rank of D.D. was given to no less than fifty-eight persons, and other degrees in great numbers. Dr. Bentley had intended that the ceremonies should be performed by his deputy; but the Duke of Somerset and other grandees being urgent that the veteran Professor should execute his functions in person, he complied, and had the fortune to confer the doctorship that day upon many distinguished characters in the Church, and among the rest upon two who became successive Archbishops of Canterbury, Thomas Herring and Matthew Hutton. These ceremonials concluded, his Majesty, after hearing an anthem at King's Chapel, was conducted to Trinity College, where he was greeted at the King's-gate by the Master in an appropriate speech. He then walked through a double line of the under-graduates to the College Hall: here a banquet was prepared, exceeding in splendour all that had ever been witnessed on the shores of the Cam. The King was seated in an elevated chair of state at the upper end of the Hall, and waited upon by twelve fellow-commoners of the College; Dr. Bentley standing by his side, and remaining in conversation with him while at dinner. His Majesty took his leave in the evening, after marking his satisfaction with the University by a noble present of two thousand pounds towards the completion of the Senate-house³.

On this occasion Dr. Bentley experienced great

³ King George II. gave another thousand pounds for the Senate-house, as I apprehend, while Prince of Wales. My account of this Royal visit is drawn from various sources: from the University Register, Cole's MSS., Salmon's Chronology, and from an interesting letter of Mr. James Bentham, the well-known historian of Ely Cathedral, who was at that time a student in Trinity College, preserved in Nichols' *Lit. Anecd.* vol. ix. p. 396.

marks of Royal favour and attention : but the results of the day were near proving fatal to him. The fatigue which he went through, and the sudden alternations of heat and cold to which he was exposed, hazardous to a person of his recluse and sedentary life, brought on an alarming fever : for some days his life was pronounced to be in great danger ; and at the particular wish of his physician, the presence or advice of his friend, Dr. Mead, was requested in this emergency. Either medical skill or the goodness of his constitution restored him : in a few weeks he recovered ; but his legs being swollen, he was sent to Bath for the benefit of the waters. After his return to College he had the satisfaction of giving his favourite daughter, Miss Joanna, in marriage to Mr. Denison Cumberland, a young man of his College, of excellent character, and good family and expectations. He was son of Archdeacon Cumberland, and grandson of the learned Bishop of Peterborough.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

His dangerous illness.

Marriage of
his daughter
Joanna.

The opinions of the civil and common lawyers having coincided in giving to the Bishop of Ely the visitatorial jurisdiction over Trinity College, it was resolved to call the Master of Trinity to account for malversation and abuse of his authority. Colbatch's hopes were now revived, and he again unsparingly devoted his labour and property to effect the great object of his life : but so completely was the Master's authority established in the society, that at first he only found three of the junior Fellows, Parne, Ingram, and Mason, who were willing to co-operate with him : these however proved highly zealous and able assistants. Parne, who was one of the College tutors, was a person of great talents and high reputation in the University. He had an intrepid spirit, but accompanied with a violent temper ; which, however, so long as he continued under Colbatch's influence, was

Scheme for
prosecuting
the Master.

Parne.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

Mason.

restrained from breaking out into excesses. Mason was all his life distinguished by a peculiar roughness of appearance and manner: but he was a man of extensive and varied learning, eminent as a mathematician, a scholar, and an antiquarian; and notwithstanding his unhewn exterior, he must have possessed excellent qualities, since we find him enjoying the friendship and regard of most of the first characters in the University for a long period. In his youth his rugged nature had been subdued by the charms of Miss Joanna Bentley: he was numbered among her devoted admirers; and if the reports of the young wits his contemporaries may be believed, he enjoyed his full share of the smiles of the fair damsel⁴. In the prosecution of her father, to which he now devoted himself, his industry, research, and accuracy, in examining and transcribing old documents and records, made him a powerful auxiliary.

⁴ Those who are curious about such anecdotes, may find, in Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 224, a copy of verses, written by Edward Prior, also a scholar of Trinity, and afterwards a Fellow, deploring his own banishment from the presence of Miss Joanna, and satirizing Mason, his favoured rival, whom he describes in these lines:

“ Mason, to love and shape eternal foe,
That chaos of a man, that unlinked lump of beau.
Behold the haggard honors of his face,
The ghastly smile, and the Cyclopian grace!
Had but this age a Polyphemus known,
The giant sure had marked him for his own.
Those harpyan claws, that should the plough sustain,
Now screen'd with ruffles, dare the plough disdain:
The brawny calves in silken stockings shown;
Strange change, to wear the best from wearing none!
In snaky curls the bristling wig appears,
With all the horrors of Medusa's hairs.
Nor disagreement thro' the whole we find;
He's Mason both in body and in mind.”

Cumberland, when he described Dr. Mason in his *Memoirs*, p. 106, was probably not aware that he had once been a favoured admirer of his mother.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

Johnson.

An important accession was soon obtained to this band—Robert Johnson, a Fellow of higher standing than those just mentioned, who had hitherto kept aloof from both the parties by which the College was distracted. His present adhesion to Bentley's enemies was attributed to personal resentment. At the late Royal visit, the Master, among other marks of favour, had been allowed to recommend whomever he pleased for degrees; he accordingly procured doctorships for seven of the Fellows attached to his interests—Parran, Barnwell, Paris, R. Walker, Humphreys, Hooper, and Vernon. The three last were below Johnson in standing: but by thus becoming doctors, they obtained a priority over him, whose degree was only Bachelor of Divinity, in the choice of livings and chambers; an advantage never afterwards to be recovered. Hooper and Vernon, who were his juniors by ten years, had also been made College-preachers by the Master; an appointment from which he was excluded. Incensed at this manifest exercise of favouritism, Johnson associated himself with Colbatch's party; and being a man of business and despatch, proved a formidable enemy to the Master. The knot of malcontents exerted themselves with much diligence in preparing articles of enquiry and accusation, and collecting evidence for the expected trial, which they hoped would take place at the College, in the course of the Bishop's triennial visitation, this summer. His Lordship, however, preferred hearing the complaint, as his predecessor, Bishop Moore, had done, upon the latter part of the 40th statute of Elizabeth, as the ground least liable to dispute. The conspirators, wishing to keep their plans secret till the moment of action, held their meetings in Dr. Colbatch's rectory-house at Orwell; which the opposite party used, consequently,

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

Bentley an-
ticipates his
prosecutors.

to term the *Rye House*; a jocular appellation, that it long retained in the society.

No caution could prevent the secret of the hostile designs transpiring: and Bentley took a prompt resolution not to wait for the attack, but to commence operations, by throwing himself upon the protection of the Crown, and at the same time engaging the College to adopt his cause as its own. He accordingly drew up the following petition to the King, which was circulated among the Fellows three or four days before they were called upon to ratify it.

Petition to
the King.

“ To the King’s most excellent Majesty,

“ The humble Petition of the Master, Fellows, and Scholars of the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, within the Town and University of Cambridge.

“ Sheweth, that this your College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity having been founded by the bounty and munificence of King Henry VIII. has ever since had the peculiar happiness to be governed by the laws and statutes received from your Royal predecessors, the successive Kings and Queens of this realm, as Royal Visitors of the same.

“ But whereas some persons are desirous to deprive this your Society of the felicity of being governed by your Majesty as Visitor of the same, in like manner as it has been by your Royal predecessors, by subjecting the same to other jurisdictions, in prejudice of the rights and privileges of this your Society, as well as in derogation of your Majesty’s right and authority, as your petitioners apprehend and believe; wherefore we your petitioners beg leave to apply to your Majesty, not to avoid any enquiry into the state of our Society, or the conduct of any member thereof, being desirous that the same may be made by any legal authority; but that your Majesty would graciously condescend to take our case into your Royal consideration, that we may receive your Royal determination thereon, in such wise as to your Majesty, in your Royal wisdom and justice, shall seem most meet and convenient.

“ In witness whereof we have hereunto put the common seal of our College, this 10th day of August, 1728.”

College
meeting.
August 10.

The meeting of the sixteen seniors, whose assent was requisite for sealing this corporate act, being

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

convened to the Chapel, the Master, foreseeing some dissent and secession, sent word by Dr. Walker to all the Fellows who dined in Hall that day, that they had better go to the Chapel to witness a matter which so much interested the whole College, and to vote, if required. Some chose to keep aloof; but twenty-one met in the chancel, where the Master produced and read the petition. Colbatch then began to read a protest, signed by himself, Johnson, and Parne, against sealing the petition, as interfering with the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ely. Bentley interrupted him, and endeavoured to snatch the paper from his hands; but Johnson taking it, read it aloud, and then required the Master to order all below the sixteen to withdraw. Parne desired that 'security might be given that the College should not, by sealing this petition, be drawn into expense:' to which the Master fiercely replied, "To whom should I give security? To thee? Who should bear the expense but the College, since it is a College affair?" The meeting becoming tumultuous, the three protesters, followed by three more Fellows, left the Chapel; and those that remained completed the business, by putting the common seal to the petition. In all their subsequent proceedings, Bentley's prosecutors alleged his conduct upon this day as a prominent article of accusation: but the facts did not warrant their charges. The tumultuary conduct of the meeting was rather owing to the Fellows than the Master; and perhaps, in the excited state of their minds, it could hardly have been prevented. The practice of putting the seal to any instrument, except in presence of the sixteen senior residents, might be irregular; but it had been frequent of late years: the statutes were so far complied with, that a formal summons had been sent to that number;

CHAP.
XVIII.
1728.

and the question was *bona fide* decided in favour of the sealing by the voices of the Master and nine of the Fellows legitimately entitled to vote upon the occasion.

Commis-
sary
Greaves.

The petition was presented to the King at Hampton Court by Mr. Greaves, a young barrister, who left the circuit for that purpose. This gentleman, whose name is much connected with the history of Trinity College for nearly sixty years, was a Fellow of Clare Hall, but had been early patronized by Dr. Bentley, at whose recommendation, it is said, he was made Commissary of the University by the Duke of Somerset. On the death of Lisle, in 1727, he became auditor, steward of the courts, and registrar of Trinity College; and what was probably of more value to a young barrister, he was the Master's counsel in all the complicated law proceedings which ensued; and never was an advocate more zealously devoted to the interests of his friend and client than he proved to those of Dr. Bentley. The patents of his College offices having been made out for the whole term of his life, and some informality being apprehended, the College exchanged them for patents for the term of fifty years, '*si tam diu vixerit*;' thinking this a reasonable extent of tenure: but their calculation fell short of the longevity of Commissary Greaves, who not only lived to surrender his patents in December 1778, a few days before their expiration, and to receive a present of plate, with the thanks of the College for his long and faithful services and his affectionate regard for the prosperity of the Society, but six years afterwards he made a donation to the College of 100*l.* to found an annual prize for an essay on the character of King William the Third.

December,
1728.

Petition of
the Bishop
of Ely.

The prosecutors drew up different counter-petitions to the King, and pressed the Bishop of Ely to pro-

ceed to a visitation : that prelate, however, waited to see what steps the Privy Council might take upon the College petition : and after three months' delay, finding it unnoticed, he also petitioned the King in Council, praying that, in case any cognizance was taken of that document, he might be heard in behalf of the rights of his See. Hereupon a committee of the Privy Council was appointed to consider the merits of the case ; which met on Nov. 27th to hear the arguments of the several parties. Dr. Bentley's counsel however prayed for a postponement; and at his instance the hearing was adjourned to the 11th of December; but not without an intimation from one of the committee, Mr. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, that he thought the matter was one which would more properly be determined in a court of law than by the Council; an opinion in which Lord Trevor, the Privy Seal, coincided.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

Nov. 6.

Before the time fixed, the Master prayed for a further postponement, alleging that the audit of Trinity College, which required his presence, began on Dec. 2, and lasted twenty days : and he was again indulged with a compliance^s. Dr. Bentley's object in these delays, besides increasing the expenses of the prosecutors, was to obtain time for printing and circulating among the members of the Council a pamphlet inforcing his own view of the case. This appeared at the beginning of 1729, entitled ' The Case of Trinity College ; whether the Crown or Bishop of Ely be the General Visitor : ' its style bearing undoubted evidence of the Master's hand. It begins with giving extracts from the opinion of the seven

Bentley
writes a
pamphlet
on the case.

^s Bentley's enemies long continued to exclaim against this pretence for delay : the fallacy of which was rendered more glaring by the fact, that he did not once come to the audit this year.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

learned counsel of Queen Anne, which held that King Edward's statutes were repealed by those of Queen Elizabeth, and that the general visitatorial power had reverted to the Crown; along with Bishop Fleetwood's letter declining to insist upon the jurisdiction, and other matters which made in favour of his own views: upon these he built an ingenious argument, to show that the 40th of Elizabeth's code must also be invalid. He contended that it was unreasonable to suppose that the Master could have two visitors, the King and the Bishop; that the latter should have power over him alone of the whole society, and not over his accusers; that he should be able to injure, but not to redress him. He argued besides with considerable humour, that this statute was void *ab initio*, from its very absurdity; since by its latter provisions, the Master of Trinity, if accused of murder or any other heinous felony, was to be tried not by the judges of the land, but by the Bishop of Ely; and if found guilty, was not to be hanged, but only expelled the College.

Colbatch's
reply.

Dr. Colbatch lost no time in preparing a pamphlet in refutation of the Master's arguments: it is called 'The Case of Trinity College in Relation to a Visitor;' and comprises a clear and comprehensive view of the question, as well as an exposure of the partial character of the other's statements. The reply however had not the advantage possessed by Bentley's tract, of being perused by the committee of the Privy Council before the hearing of the case. This having been several times postponed, and then interrupted by the business of Parliament, did not actually take place till the middle of March, when the Master and many of the Fellows were present. After listening to the arguments of Sir Philip Yorke for the College, and Mr. Fazakerly for the Bishop, their Lordships

The Privy
Council de-
cline all in-
terference.

came to the decision, which must have been anticipated, that they could not advise his Majesty to interfere at all with the question, and that the Bishop was at liberty to proceed in the cause as he thought proper.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

Before we describe the further operations of the contending parties, it is necessary to notice a dispute, which was carried on at the same time with much energy, between Archbishop Wake and Dr. Bentley. To embroil the Master with that great prelate was part of the hostile system of his prosecutors, whose cause stood particularly in need of confederates among the great. The occasion arose from his nephew, Thomas Bentley, holding the place of Library-keeper of the College. This office had been founded in 1602, by Sir Edward Stanhope, the Vicar General, an old Fellow of Trinity, and endowed with a benefaction of 700*l*: he attached to his foundation several strict conditions; ordering, among other things, that the Librarian should not be absent more than forty-two days in the year; that he should never take a higher degree than Master of Arts; and directing, that if the Master and Seniors do not fill up the place within fourteen days after the occurrence of a vacancy, the appointment should lapse to the Archbishop of Canterbury: of this last clause the Primate had actually availed himself once before in the year 1716, by appointing a successor on the resignation of Mr. Clagett, the same who became afterwards Bishop of Exeter. The present Librarian, so far from adhering to the injunction of residence, had not been in the College more than three months in any one year; and had not resided, upon the whole, above six months in six years: and he had further broken the conditions by taking the degree of Doctor of Laws. Colbatch and Parne, while drawing up the

Bentley's
dispute with
Archbishop
Wake on
the library-
keeper's
place.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

Master's offences of omission and commission, as charges for the Visitor, bethought them of selecting the case of the Librarian, as one to be submitted to the Primate; they therefore wrote to inform his Grace, that the office was forfeited by non-compliance with the rules, and consequently waited his appointment. Archbishop Wake immediately addressed himself to Dr. Bentley, enquiring into the facts of the case; and a spirited correspondence ensued. A dispute between the Head of a College and an Archbishop must be maintained on such unequal ground that it might be supposed not likely to be of long continuance: the present controversy did, however, last nearly a year and a half: and Bentley, who was all this time occupied in defending himself against a formidable prosecution instituted for his ruin, nevertheless held much the highest tone in this debate. The merits of the argument bear little upon the other events of the Doctor's life, and are of too local a nature to interest the reader: but the whole correspondence, which has been preserved in the Lambeth Library, exhibits the ingenuity and argumentative subtilty which we have so often remarked in Bentley; while the letters of Parne, who conducted the opposition, show talent, spirit, and manliness; and the Archbishop's are marked with a liberal and candid consideration for all parties, a clear-sighted penetration, and an anxiety to act right under embarrassing circumstances. Bentley pursued the same system of tactics as in his great cause; inventing delays, and calling attention to other questions, in order to gain time and the chance of availing himself of circumstances which might intervene. Thus at one time the Senior Fellows are not all returned to College, at another his nephew has a fever, and he himself a sprained ancle; while two or three small underplots

form the matter of correspondence between Lambeth Palace and Trinity Lodge. Meanwhile Thomas Bentley was himself not solicitous to retain a situation, the duties of which he had no intention of fulfilling. Nevertheless, an argument was drawn up in his name, against the claim of the Primate; and thereupon the Master and eight Fellows subscribed their satisfaction at the reasons which he alleged, and decided that the place was not vacant. This step, however, occasioned the Master much difficulty: some of the Seniors, though obsequious enough in other matters, did not relish embarking in a quarrel with the Archbishop, and declined to subscribe their names; and he was forced to complete his list of eight signatures from the very juniors of the society. The argument itself is written in a style as foreign as Nov. 11, 1728. possible from the modest and unassuming manner of Thomas Bentley, and bears indubitable marks of his uncle's pen; who, indeed, not only acknowledged it in the College, but boasted of the short time in which it had been despatched. In this piece, as in Dec. 7, 1728. almost all the writings of his latter years, Bentley injures the effect of his close and ingenious reasoning by the indulgence of a taunting and contemptuous tone, which is at war with propriety and good taste: this remark applies peculiarly to the concluding paragraph:

“Two things, I think, I may be sure of: that if *vis major* forces one [a librarian] upon the College, without their own election, it may resume what it has voluntarily given, and it will pay him his strict dues, as covenanted by the will. The other is, that he who by accusation turns one man out, for breach of some puny articles, may *eodem jure* be himself turned out for the breach of any one of them; and so the third successor in his turn; so a fourth, and a fifth, *in infinitum*. And since all the pack of those articles never were kept, nor ever can or will be, you may possibly see a dozen

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

CHAP. new Librarians in one year; and in the meantime the Library will
 XVIII. be gloriously served.
 1729.

“THOMAS BENTLEY.”

Colbatch, in a reply to this argument, observes upon the liberty of so free a style in a composition intended for the eye of the Primate :

“Men may, by constantly treating their equals and inferiors in a gross way, so much debauch their manners as to forget that any decency is to be observed even to the greatest of mankind.”

Decided by
 the Attor-
 ney Gene-
 ral.

March 1,
 1728-29.

June 20,
 1729.

To bring the matter to a conclusion, Archbishop Wake proposed that it should be referred to the decision of the Attorney General, though aware that he was retained as Dr. Bentley's counsel in the great cause which was approaching. To this the latter assented; and Sir Philip Yorke, after a considerable interval, gave his opinion that, as the penalty of forfeiture was not specifically attached to those two violations of Sir Edward Stanhope's rules, and as the librarian had not received three admonitions for his neglect, the office was not vacant. Hereupon the Archbishop gave up the point: the matter, however, was not suffered to drop. His Grace had already appointed Sandys Hutchinson, a Bachelor of Arts of the College, recommended by Colbatch and Parne, to hold the office: and this young man's uncle thought proper to maintain the contest, and assert his nephew's right. The Master, having triumphed in his argument, wished to free himself from further trouble on this question: accordingly Dr. Thomas Bentley made a formal resignation of the office; and the Master and Seniors, within the limited time, elected another young man, Gossip, to succeed. But as this act could not alter the former question, Hutch-

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

inson applied to the Court of King's Bench for a Mandamus to the College to admit him Librarian, as having the nomination of the Archbishop; and a rule was granted to show cause. Bentley having no motive for further dispute, and having already as much law proceedings on his hands as he could manage, put an end to the question by making two librarians: Hutchinson was admitted upon the conditions of Sir E. Stanhope, and with no more stipend than he had allotted; and Gossip was made 'additional Library-keeper, with a salary from the College.'

As soon as the decision of the Privy Council had left the Bishop of Ely at liberty to receive the accusation against the Master of Trinity, steps were taken by the complainants to prosecute their charges. Dr.

Colbatch was laid up this spring by a fit of the ague, and felt the infirmities of increasing years. It was therefore arranged that Mr. Johnson should be promoter, or prosecutor; and he embarked in a cause which was likely to prove very expensive, with no other resources than his own small income, and the promised assistance of his brethren, who strained every nerve, and subjected themselves to every privation, to supply funds for the accomplishment of their undertaking. The principal reliance was placed on the pecuniary resources of two individuals, Dr. Colbatch, and Mr. Edward Smith. The latter was a Fellow of the College who is now first mentioned in our history: he had resided for some time in the country; and I find no mention of his having ever come into collision with the Master: but his strong opinion of the want of a superior authority to correct the existing state of the Society, induced him to devote his means, which were more considerable than those of his brethren, to the prosecution of this suit.

Johnson
promoter of
the suit
against
Bentley.

Edward
Smith.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

April 11.
Bentley's
expenses
paid by the
College.

His correspondence with Colbatch, in whom his confidence was unlimited, marks a singularly spirited, liberal, and disinterested character. The contest, however, was unequal: while the prosecutors embarked in an enterprise of certain difficulty and expense, at their own risk and cost, the party accused obtained an order of the Seniority, regularly entered in the Conclusion-book, that all charges which might result from the proceedings against him, as being connected with the question of the visitatorial power, and therefore a matter of common concern, should be defrayed from the revenues of the College.

April 1.
Bishop
Greene cites
Dr. Bentley.

The articles of accusation against the Master being drawn up by Colbatch, and digested into form by a professional civilian, were presented to Bishop Greene, who immediately cited Dr. Bentley to appear before him, as 'Visitor specially appointed by the 40th statute of Elizabeth,' at Ely House on May 5, to answer the charges preferred by Mr. Johnson, the promoter. Of this citation the Master took no notice, until two days before the time fixed for his appearance; when he made an application to the Court of King's Bench for a rule to prohibit the Bishop's proceeding against him; alleging, that the 40th statute, the ground of his pretended power, required that the Master should be twice admonished by the Vice-master and Seniors, before any accusation could be preferred against him. The reader may recollect that this same objection was started by Dr. Bentley to the charges laid against him nineteen years before, in a letter to Bishop Moore⁶. It was then overruled by that prelate; but he perceived, that if he could obtain the sanction of the Court of King's Bench to his interpretation, he

May 3.
Application
to the Court
of King's
Bench for a
prohibition.

⁶ See the statute itself in vol. i. p. 250, and Bentley's arguments upon it in vol. i. p. 265, *note*.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

should be for ever relieved from all trouble from this statute : as he took care to have a Vice-master who was his creature and tool, there was no chance of an admonition, which could never be pronounced but with his concurrence. The Court granted a May 7. rule for the Bishop to show cause why he should not be prohibited : and the Master speedily summoned his Seniority, who are, with himself, the interpreters of doubtful questions in the statutes : he here proposed his explanation, which six of the eight Seniors approved and ratified ; declaring it to be the sense of the statutes that two previous admonitions were requisite before the Master could be accused of the greater crimes mentioned in the latter section of the chapter⁷. But in a few days the Bishop's counsel, Dr. Henchman, Serjeant Eyres, and Mr. Fazakerly, showed cause against the rule before the Court of King's Bench. The Judges of that high tribunal had been all changed since the affairs of Dr. Bentley were last under its cognizance. Chief Justice Raymond now Proceedings of the Court. presided ; and his brethren were the Judges Page, Probyn, and Lee. The arguments against the prohibition appear to have been irresistible ; at least the instructions for the Bishop's counsel, which are preserved, comprise the most satisfactory demonstration that the admonitions by the Vice-master and Seniors apply only to the cases of negligence, or lighter delinquency, mentioned in the first part of the statute : nor did the Court hesitate in forming the same judgment.

⁷ This interpretation by the Master and six Seniors, dated May 7, 1729, with the reasons on which it is founded, was not inserted in the Conclusion-book, but written on a loose paper, in the Master's possession. It is not easy to see Bentley's reason for not entering it in the regular register : possibly that volume might just then be submitted to the examination of lawyers.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

The four Judges gave their opinions to that effect, and set the question at rest by discharging the rule, and leaving the Bishop of Ely at liberty to proceed as Visitor.

Nature of
the articles.

It was apprehended that this point being decided against him, all Bentley's resources were at an end, and that he must now abide a trial upon the charges which had been so long and loudly made against his administration. Bishop Greene, determining to exercise his judicial functions with firmness, and at the same time to show attention to the feelings and interests of the defendant, sent him a copy of the articles, with notice of a day on which he might make what preliminary objections he thought proper to their form or substance. These articles touched upon almost all the material events of the College history during the last eighteen years. There was, however, one charge of grave import, which we have not yet mentioned among the alleged delinquencies of the Master: his neglect of daily service in the College chapel. For twenty years past he had scarcely ever been seen at prayers in the morning; and for ten years or more as seldom in the evening. There could be no doubt that this habitual omission was a serious offence in the Head of a College, whose station called upon him to set an example to the whole society of regularity and piety. His excuse was infirmity of health; but as he was generally known to be a person of robust constitution, this pretence was treated with incredulity and ridicule: and, accordingly, his habitual neglect of chapel was made the head and front of the long catalogue of his offences. Medical testimony, and that of his intimates, distinctly proved his great liability to catch cold, and the consequent danger of his leaving the house in damp or severe

weather ; but it made out no apology for his absence in other seasons of the year⁸.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

The accusations presented a more formidable catalogue of delinquencies than those upon which the Master had been tried before Bishop Moore in 1714 : at the same time it may be remarked that on this, as well as the former occasion, he was arraigned for a number of acts, which rather deserved the name of informalities than of violations of statute. Some of the prosecutors were aware of this disproportioned character of the charges ; but they waived their objections, in deference to Colbatch, who had devoted his life to the prosecution of this cause, and was regarded as the centre and main-spring of their party. His feeling was peculiarly strong as to the propriety of adhering to statutes in their literal and simple acceptance : he had been engaged in discussions and altercations with the Master upon every one of those particulars ; and some of them, though of small consequence in themselves, he deemed necessary to prove his habitual and systematic disregard of the statutes. It appears however that they did in fact afford Bentley's friends a ground of outcry against his prosecutors, as descending to frivolous and worthless matters in order to injure the object of their hatred. They complained also of the date of part of the pretended offences : some of them were of twenty years' standing ;

⁸ For a long time the non-attendance of Dr. Bentley had been considered so certain, that the Chapel-clerks had forborne to light the candles of the Master's stall, in order to avail themselves of that small perquisite. After his restoration to his degrees in 1724, he resumed his long-neglected attendance at evening chapel : on which occasion, there occurred a ludicrous scene, detailed in a copy of doggrel verses in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 920, and *Noble's Continuation of Granger*, vol. iii. p. 104. The lock of the door of his stall had, from long disuse, become rusty, and he was unable to open it. The fact was related nearly in the same way by an eye-witness, Mr. Edward Smith, in his deposition at Ely House.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

and even the transaction with Serjeant Miller, upon which such great stress was laid, had taken place no less than ten years before. But the prosecutors alleged in reply, that they had been ever since endeavouring in vain to find a Visitor, to whom their complaints could be preferred; and that this was the first moment that they could even obtain leave to make a statement of their grievances.

Bentley ap-
pears at Ely
House.
June 10.

The preliminary steps were taken in this great cause at Ely House on the second of June, when Dr. Bentley appeared in person, habited in a purple cloak; and had a further day appointed for tendering his exceptions to the articles⁹. On that day his proctor, Greenly, excepted against a large portion of them, that they alleged nothing more than offences of negligence, which belonged to the first part of the 40th statute, and were therefore not cognizable, since he had never yet been admonished by the Vice-master and Seniors. Against all accusations of misdemeanours previous to the year 1721, he objected, that those matters, supposing them to be criminal, had been pardoned by the Act of Grace. Lastly, whatever had been done by order of the Master and Seniors, was, he contended, a corporate act, and therefore not cognizable by the Bishop, but by the King, as general Visitor of the College. All these objections were overruled by Bishop Greene: he did, however, direct several alterations in the wording of the articles, principally for the sake of specification and exactness, and one article, which related to the pre-elections of fellows, he entirely expunged; since that practice, however censurable, could not be shown to be a violation

His objec-
tions.

⁹ Mr. Shelton, a barrister, an old member of Trinity College, writes thus to Dr. Colbatch, June 3. "I was last night at Ely House, where the Doctor appeared in person, with a purple cloak; which occasioned some of the *Turba Remi* to call him Cardinal Bentivoglio."

of the statutes. The articles were then returned to the promoter, and a day appointed for presenting them in their corrected form.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

But before that time arrived, Bentley gave another specimen of the skill with which he could elude and baffle his adversaries. A few days before the end of Trinity term, his counsel, Mr. Reeve, applied to the Court of King's Bench for another writ of prohibition against Bishop Greene proceeding as judge in this cause; alleging the three objections just mentioned, which his Lordship had refused to admit. The Court again granted a rule for the Bishop to show cause why he should not be prohibited: ordering all proceedings to be suspended while the question was before them, and allowing civil lawyers to speak upon the subject, as one particularly belonging to their profession.

June 21.
Second ap-
plication to
the King's
Bench.

From Bishop Greene's decision upon the admissibility of the articles, it was easy to discover that he considered some which could unquestionably be established, like that of the bargain with Serjeant Miller, as sufficient cause for the deprivation of the Master. It was, therefore, the policy of the latter to prevent the case ever coming to a trial before that prelate. To effect this purpose, delay and expense were the surest expedients: the former enabled him to avail himself of circumstances to break the confederacy; and as the Bishop's costs were to be defrayed by the prosecutors, he calculated that protracted litigation must ere long exhaust their resources; while all his own expenses were paid by the College stock, in which his enemies bore a share, and were thus doubly losers by the action. His motion, if it effected nothing else, was certain to postpone the business till after the long vacation, that period in which the Bishop had reckoned upon

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

completing the trial. The suggestions upon which his application was grounded, were so framed as to include the whole of the articles, and extend over 230 pages; a copy of which, when applied for by the opposite side, occupied above a week in transcription, and cost them no less than nine guineas.

June 29.

Before the end of the term the Bishop's counsel showed cause against the rule, and urged the Judges to take off the prohibition, as being a mere stratagem on the part of Dr. Bentley to gain the long vacation. The Court however, not having time to enter into the questions involved in the application, continued the prohibition; and the discussion was of course postponed till the Michaelmas term. They afterwards granted a rule, empowering the Bishop, or his agents, to consult all the College books, records, and registers, for the purpose of evidence: which office his Lordship deputed to Parne and Ingram, two of the prosecutors.

Resumes
his edition
of the New
Testament.

When the summer recess afforded a truce to his judicial struggle, Bentley appears to have resumed the task of his New Testament, with a resolution of discharging his debt to the public, and at the same time supplying a practical answer to those who accused him of passing 'an irreligious life.' His attention was now directed to two particulars; the evidence respecting the disputed verse of St. John, and the collation of the Vatican manuscript. Upon the former point, the advocates of the genuineness of the text relied greatly upon its insertion in the Dublin Greek manuscript. To ascertain, therefore, the antiquity and authority of that copy became an object of much importance: he applied for information on various particulars to Dr. Delany, the well-known friend of Dean Swift, then Chancellor of Christ-

church, and to Mr. Doyle, one of the Chaplains of that Cathedral¹⁰. The former sent a fac-simile of that part of the Epistle, in which the Heavenly Witnesses occur, and the latter answered all the Doctor's queries with minute and laborious exactness. From the character of Bentley's enquiries, I apprehend that it was his intention to introduce a discussion upon this controverted verse in the *Prolegomena* of his edition¹¹. His correspondent at Rome,

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

¹⁰ His applications were made through the medium of Mr. John Wilson, one of the Fellows of Trinity.

¹¹ I shall quote the concluding sentence of Dr. Delany's letter, as it is curious to see what a person of his celebrity felt upon this question :

" This is all the information I can give upon this controversy ; which I am sorry to see revived in an age wherein the early editions of the New Testament ought, in my humble opinion, to have more weight than perhaps all the manuscripts now extant put together. No man who knows the character of the early editors, can doubt the credit of those manuscripts they published from."

Mr. Doyle's letters are very long, and his style unhappily prolix : nevertheless, his statements respecting the Dublin MS., which lay before him while he wrote, are so important, that the readers who take an interest in that subject, will feel obliged to me for the following extracts :

" Sir,

" I received yours this day, and immediately set about consulting the MSS. you desired, especially that text you mention : of which I send you a copy, with part of the context. I had thought at first there would have been but little occasion for it, because 'tis inserted at length in Mr. David Martin's book, which I mentioned in my last : in which also there is a large description and account of our MS. But I find by my own notes, which I have taken of the MS., and by looking into the MS. itself, and comparing it with Mr. Martin's account of it, (which I have been doing almost all this day) that in many things he, or Dean Yeard, from whom he received it, have been very often mistaken, and even in this very text ; for though the words agree with the original, yet the writing Mr. Martin has inserted in his book, p. 272, as the exact copy of the MS. is, I assure you, not a little different from it ; as you may judge yourself by examining the paper inclosed, which I copied this day in the library, and which is as near the original as I could possibly write it. And yet, after all, the form of the letters is different, as the hand of one man will, though he takes never so much care to make it like another's, be, after all, distinguishable from it.

" Now as to your other demands concerning the text, I have been no less careful about them. The paper is the very same with the rest of the

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

Baron de Stosch, transmitted to him a transcript of a large quantity of interlinear and marginal notes, extracted from the Vatican manuscript; for this pur-

book, as is also in all respects the colour of the ink, and the hand and manner of writing. The leaf on which this text is wrote, is not any where scraped or blotted, neither is it pasted in, but makes one continued piece with another leaf, which contains part of the Apocalypse. And thus I hope I have been as particular with relation to this passage as Dr. Bentley could wish; and if in this, or any thing else, I can be serviceable to him, while he is on so excellent a work, I shall serve him with the greatest pleasure and readiness imaginable.”—

Then follows a very long and detailed account of the form, size, and description of the MS. with much verbosity. The following are extracts.

“It is all of paper, but the paper exceeding thick, as thick as any white paper I have ever seen; but withal exceeding smooth and fine, without the least wrinkle, knot, or the like, that ever I observed. Dean Yeard indeed (and from him Mr. Martin) asserts it is parchment: but when a dispute arose between us thereon, we referred it to another, who affirmed it to be paper; of which this is a clear proof, that all the rules which we see in paper are clearly to be seen in every leaf.

“Dean Yeard is certainly a very learned gentleman, and much better versed in these things than I am: but his eyes are so very bad, and have been this considerable time, that one that knew him would not wonder, if he were mistaken in every thing the knowledge of which depended on his eye-sight: and it is to this misfortune we are to attribute his mistakes in this and several other particulars concerning this MS. And for this reason, and also because Mr. Martin has very often not done him justice in misquoting and mistranslating the Latin letter he sent him on this subject, and from which Mr. Martin, in his defence of the 1 John v. 7., has taken what he has said concerning this MS. (all which the Dean himself told me) I say on these accounts it is that you cannot give much heed to any thing Mr. Martin there speaks about this book, at least nothing contrary to the account I send you.”

“As for the age, ’tis in all probability as late or later than printing, and so Dean Yeard thought, and so he wrote Mr. Martin word, though this latter pretends the Dean told him ’twas five or six hundred years old. And as for the proof Mr. Martin brings of its being so old as he pretends, ’tis only a note wrote at the bottom of St. Mark’s Gospel, declaring in what year the Evangelist wrote it, which yet Mr. Martin has ridiculously and preposterously interpreted, as if thereby the MS. I am speaking of was declared to be wrote in the eleventh century.”

“It agrees very much with the Alex. MS., even where they both differ from all others, and especially where the Alex. agrees with the Vulgar Latin, though this latter not always; but the various readings, (supposing this to be Montfortius’s) are not very exactly collated by Walton or Mills, and therefore if Dr. Bentley would insert the various readings, out of

pose he had employed the services of the Abbé Ridotti, as his old amanuensis Mico was dead. It appears from the Baron's letter, dated July 9, 1729, that Dr. Bentley had urged despatch, and was in great haste to receive those extracts from the Vatican. This urgency, and the fact that in the copy from which he designed to print his edition, both text and notes were in as great forwardness as his materials allowed, make it probable that he waited only for the completion of the collations of the Vatican MS. to send his book to the press. After this time I discover no trace of his being occupied upon his projected edition: the contest which he waged with his prosecutors allowed him but little intermission for several years; and in those short intervals other literary objects were pressed upon him, and when at length greater leisure arrived, it found him disabled by age for the exertion requisite to complete the work.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1729.

Causes of
its not being
published.

In the Michaelmas term the war recommenced upon the affair of the Bishop of Ely's jurisdiction, and the articles against the Master of Trinity. The former, being defendant, showed cause in the Court of King's Bench, against the rule for a prohibition, which Dr. Bentley, as plaintiff, had obtained in the preceding term. The matter of the 'suggestions,' upon which the rule had been obtained, was discussed by the respective counsel at two different hearings. On the latter day the Court remarked that 'the cause was of a nature to which they were unaccustomed; that none like it had ever been before them: they declined, therefore, to pronounce judgment upon the case, until it had been argued by way of

Rule for a
prohibition
made absolute.

Nov. 10.

Montfortius, we must collate it anew for him; because he cannot trust to the others, besides that they have collated only to the first chapter of the Romans."

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

‘ declaration and answer ;’ and in order to give an opportunity for such proceedings, they made the rule for a prohibition absolute.

Progress of
a new mode
of action.

April 27.

The only course which now remained for Dr. Bentley’s prosecutors was, that the Bishop should sue for what is called a writ of *consultation* ; that being the act of the superior Court, by which alone the prohibition could be removed, and the cause sent back to the Bishop’s jurisdiction. Accordingly the pleadings for that purpose began in the year 1730. On the 31st of March the plea of the Bishop was delivered to the Court. But it was found necessary to apply to the Bench for a rule to oblige Bentley, the plaintiff, to reply to this plea : and when the time came for his reply, his counsel prayed for a month longer : the Judges, however, thinking this delay unreasonable, granted him only a week. Dr. Bentley then put in his *replication*, which was, as Strange observes in his Reports, ‘ immaterial.’ The Bishop immediately *demurred*, that being the next step in the action, whereby the defendant denies the sufficiency of the matter of law alleged by the opposite party.

June 2.

This description of suit was admirably calculated for Bentley’s immediate objects, procrastination and expense. As it is generally the interest of the plaintiff to avoid all unnecessary delay, and to expedite the decision, the practice of the Court presumes that he will lose no time in taking the steps which are incumbent upon him. But Bentley, though plaintiff, had an opposite view ; he neglected to ‘ join in *demurrer*,’ the next step in the action, which is requisite to submit the consideration of the legal question to the Judges. On the first day of Trinity term, a rule of Court was obtained to oblige the plaintiff ‘ to join in *demurrer*.’ This done, the next matter was to enter

all the proceedings in the action upon the records, and to make copies of them, called *paper-books*, for the use of the Judges. To 'make up the paper-book,' is the ordinary business of the plaintiff; but as he neglected to do this, the defendant had it made up, and delivered to Bentley's attorney: the latter replied, that this step was irregular, that it was assuming a business belonging to the plaintiff. Hereupon the Court was applied to by both parties; but the result of some intricate management on this point was, that the Bishop's lawyers were unable to push the affair any further during the Trinity term; and thus another legal year passed away.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

Just before this time a general expectation prevailed that a termination would be put to these tedious litigations, by the removal of the Doctor from the scene of dispute to a considerable dignity in the Church. It was understood that some promise had been made to him of the deanery of Lincoln, which became vacant in March this year by the death of his friend Dr. Gee. It was natural to expect that he would eagerly embrace an opportunity of exchanging his headship, the present tenure of which seemed precarious, for such a station. He went to town on the occasion; but for some reason the negotiation failed. It appears that he did not consider that deanery, although richly endowed, as an equivalent for the sacrifice of his academical stations: he probably reckoned, that if he once quitted his mastership, he might experience difficulty in retaining the emoluments of the Regius professorship. As for the efforts now making to deprive him, he relied upon his own resources to defeat them; and this legal warfare, although it consumed his time, did not injure his health, his spirits, or his peace of mind. From putting together the different accounts, I conclude that he

Bentley refuses an offer of the deanery of Lincoln.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

aimed at getting both the deanery of Lincoln and a stall at Westminster; and being refused that addition, declined giving up his mastership¹². When he wrote word to the College that he was not to quit them, some of his friends, who had gone all lengths to serve him, and were perhaps alarmed at the prospect of his leaving them at that juncture, determined to give him a triumphal reception on his return. Accordingly, part of them went to meet him at Bourn Bridge, and brought him back in triumph to Cambridge; while others arrayed the College so as to welcome his return in a manner similar to that in which they had received the late visit of his Majesty¹³.

New Senate-
house.

The interior of the new Senate-house being at length completed, it was determined that the opening of this beautiful room should be accompanied with the solemnities of a 'Public Commencement.' This celebration had usually occurred at intervals of fifteen

¹² Mr. Say, the Bishop's secretary, writes to Dr. Colbatch, March 21, "There has been a strong report last week, that Dr. B. would be made Dean of L. and Preb. of Westm. and give you a release: but that report is now vanished: and unless he will take the deanery alone, you must e'en be troubled with him till the end of your law-suit."

¹³ This scene is described in a copy of doggrel verses, given in Cole's MSS. They may also be seen in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1779, p. 560; they are called 'The Trinity College Triumph.' The writer is evidently a member of the College, and there is much allusion to the small politics and jokes of the place. The following are the concluding lines:

"But Baker alone to the lodge was admitted,
Where he bowed, and he cring'd, and he smil'd, and he prated:
'And pray now, good Master, how came it, the Queen,
Who knew you so well, would not make you a Dean?'
Quoth he, 'I might now have been in Lincoln Church,
Would I've left my dear college and you in the lurch.
But, I thank 'em for that, they shall ne'er find me willing
To give eighteen-pence to receive a poor shilling.'
Then he grinn'd a broad laugh at his own joke so pretty,
And the Vice-master smil'd 'cause the Master was witty:
And let him laugh on; he'll soon find to his cost,
A shilling is better than eighteen-pence lost."

or sixteen years, and therefore naturally coincided with an event which forms an interesting epoch in the history of the University of Cambridge¹⁴. The Tory party, which retained the ascendancy, were solicitous that this august ceremony should take place under the auspices of a chief magistrate, whose feelings coincided with their own. It was the turn of Dr. Mawson, the Master of Corpus-Christi, a personage, the splendid liberality of whose donations has made his name illustrious both in the University and the Church : but he was a Whig ; and the other party contrived to put in nomination along with him Dr. Lambert, the Master of St. John's, who had served the office last year but one. The election took place on the following day : the ministerial party were entirely taken by surprise ; they exerted themselves, however, with great energy to obtain a majority on the poll for Mawson : in particular Dr. Gooch, who had recently changed his party, used in favour of the Whig cause the activity and influence, which we have heretofore seen him exerting on the opposite side. But the Tory interest was still too strong, and elected Lambert by 84 votes against 83¹⁵.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

Contest for
Vice-chan-
cellorship.

When the new building was finished for the transaction of academical business, the University converted the old Senate-house into a room for the reception of

King's
books
placed in the
old Senate-
house.

¹⁴ The last Public Commencement had been in 1714, when Dr. Greene, the Bishop of Ely, had presided as Vice-chancellor. Roger Long, afterwards Master of Pembroke Hall, and a distinguished astronomer, being then a young man, spoke the Music-speech. Those who are curious about such matters, will find a burlesque copy of verses relative to that Commencement, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

¹⁵ Cole, in his manuscript Life of Dr. Lambert, gives an account of this election ; and he also places on record some doggrel verses, written on the occasion by one of the successful side : they are very scurrilous, and no part of them is worth quoting. Cole gives the list of votes on each side : in Trinity College seventeen voted for Mawson, three for Lambert : in St. John's, none for Mawson, thirty-two for Lambert.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

July.

the late King's present of books ; keeping them apart from the rest of the library, in opposition to the advice of Middleton, the Principal-librarian. Their sojourn here was designed indeed only to be temporary, or, to use the words of the Grace, 'till they had a building more suitable to the munificence of their Royal benefactor : ' but here, after the lapse of a century, they still remain ¹⁶.

Taylor's
music-
speech,
July 6.

There seem to have been three leading objects of attraction at the Public Commencement. First, Dr. Bentley appeared once more in the quality of Divinity Professor, moderating and opposing for several hours at the theological exercises, which were on this occasion performed in the new Senate-house, to indulge public curiosity. Secondly, the University was treated with an extraordinary exhibition of musical talent, by Maurice Greene, the celebrated composer, who set to music Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, altered and enlarged by the poet himself for this occasion ¹⁷.— Lastly, the medley of Latin and English, called a Music-speech, was delivered by one of the best scholars in the University, John Taylor, of St. John's College, afterwards renowned as the editor of Lysius and Demosthenes. Part of this farrago consists of a satirical copy of verses, the leading feature of which is a description of the students of Trinity College as an idle and frivolous set, addicted to all the vanities of dress and dissipation, and neglectful of science, literature, and every thing else which ought to be cultivated in an University. The feelings of College

¹⁶ This room, which was more commonly known by the name of 'the Regent-house,' is on the north side of the quadrangle, over the Divinity Schools. Its denomination in all official proceedings was *Novum Sacellum* ; of the origin of which term I am not certain.

¹⁷ Immediately after the Commencement Dr. Greene was appointed by the Senate to the professorship of Music, which happened to be then vacant, as a reward for his display of talent on this occasion.

jealousy must have been exceedingly strong a hundred years ago, to prompt such a sweeping condemnation of the whole youth of a rival Society, and predict still greater degeneracy in the course of one more age, when Trinity Library was to be converted into a ball-room!! However, now that the age has actually passed, it is curious to remark how completely Taylor's predictions have been falsified; and that the youth of that College, which he designates only as a 'dressing, dancing race,' have been pre-eminently distinguished in the Senate-house, then first opened, for their successful devotion to every laudable pursuit¹⁸.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

¹⁸ The lines which follow are part of an address to the ladies who graced the University with their presence in the Senate-house on that occasion :

"By this plain dealing will the fair-ones guess
Our clumsy breeding, and our lame address.

'Tis true our courtship's homely, but sincere;
And that's a doctrine which you seldom hear.—

I hope the charge is not so general yet,
As no good-natured comment to admit.

Pray, cast your eyes upon our youth below,
And say, what think you of our *purpled* Beau?

For if the picture's not exactly true,
The thanks to white-glov'd *Trinity* are due.

What though our *Johnian* plead but scanty worth,
Cold and ungenial as his native North,

Who never taught the virgin's breast to glow,
Nor rais'd a wish beyond what vestals know;

The *Jesuit* cloister'd in his pensive cell,
Where vapours dark with contemplation dwell,

Dream out a being to the world unknown,
And sympathise with every changing moon;

Though politics engross the sons of *Clare*,
Nor yields the state one moment to the fair;

Though *Ben'et* mould in indolence and ease,
And whist prolong the balmy rest of *Kay's*;

And one continued solemn slumber reigns,
From untun'd *Sidney* to protesting *Queen's*;

Yet, O ye fair! ———

Let this one dressing, dancing race atone
For all the follies of the pedant gown.

The Templar need not blush for such allies,
Not jealous *Christ-Church* this applause denies.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

Internal
state of
Trinity Col-
lege.

Vindictive
measures
against the
prosecutors.

April 1.

Such an effusion as this is not the place to look to for a true account of the state of a society: however, there is reason to believe that the satire, though overcharged, was not altogether unfounded. Dr. Colbatch used to declare, that his principal motive for such exertions to procure a visitation, was the dissolution of discipline, and consequent neglect of study, which was an unavoidable consequence of the feuds and distractions of the College. The state of things resembled that into which the society was thrown by the prosecution of the Master twenty years before; but with this difference: at that time all the Seniors were at the head of his enemies; now the majority of the governors were under his absolute control, and gave him the disposal of their funds, and the power of legislating at his discretion. This he was never backward in exerting for the annoyance of his adversaries. Parne had distinguished himself by his activity in the prosecution, and incurred a deep share of the Master's resentment. Being a person of reputation for ability and scholarship, upon a vacancy of the Public-oratorship this year, he was nominated by

How sleek their looks! how undisturbed their air,
By midnight vigils, or by morning prayer!
No pale reflection does those cheeks invade,
No hectic student scares the yielding maid.
Long from those shades has learned dust retir'd,
And toilets shine where folios once aspir'd.
Pass but an age—perhaps thy labour, Wren,
Rear'd to the Muse, displays a softer scene.
Polite reformers! luxury to see
The pile stand sacred, Heidegger, to thee.
Where Plato undisturb'd his mansion keeps,
And Homer now past contradiction sleeps,
The vizard squire shall hear the concert's sound,
And midnight vestals trip the measur'd round.
I see the classes into side-boards flung,
And musty codes transform'd to modern song;
The solemn wax in gilded sconces glare,
Where poring Wormius dangled once in air.”—

the Heads of Colleges as one of the two candidates ; but owing, as it seems, to the division of his own College, he was outnumbered in the contest by his opponent, Mr. Williams. As a public tutor, he was more exposed than the other prosecutors to be harassed by the ruling powers. Frequent orders were made to enforce strictness of discipline ; but the penalties were attached rather to the tutor than the pupil. Thus, in an edict against keeping dogs in College, the tutor who did not prevent the practice was to be ' excluded from his office : ' an order was made, from which two of the Board dissented, that the payments of the young men to the College should be advanced by their tutors, monthly ; and in case of any default, both tutor and pupil were to be discommoded. These, and other enactments of a similar complexion, were made by Baker and the Seniors, who, while the Master was in London, carried on operations at home with great activity. Most of the younger Fellows who adhered to the prosecutors, were convened before the Board, and censured upon different pretexts. Prior and Hadderton were admonished for charges of contumacy to Dr. Craister, the dean. Ingram and Mason, who were employed in consulting the College records, were special objects of the Master's resentment. Mason being a man of rough manners, grounds of complaint were easily discovered against him. He had, upon some provocation, beaten one of the butler's servants, and for this offence he was convened by the Master before the Seniority : here an uncommon occurrence took place. Bentley was unable to obtain the consent of a majority to any severe punishment ; but five dissentients, of whom Colbatch was one, agreed to inflict the statutable censure of the loss of one month's commons, and an admonition. This blow was in a

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

Jan. 5,
1730-31.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

Feb. 5, .
1730-31.

few weeks followed up by a similar one. Upon Ingram going to demand some of the College books under authority from the Court of King's Bench, the Master brought against him and Mason a charge of having ill-used the College cook, by setting him in the stocks. The circumstance had taken place nearly four years before, and had long been forgotten. Mason, who had been the principal, alarmed by threats of proceeding to extremities, and having the terrors of expulsion before his eyes, propitiated the Master by some concessions; the other, who possessed firmer nerves, faced the storm, and was convened before the Seniority. But the charge was so palpably vexatious, that Bentley could not gain the consent of a majority to the infliction of any punishment: he, therefore, adjourned the meeting; and then declared himself and Craister the judges of a case of discipline, appointing Hacket and Walker their two assessors. Before such a tribunal, all difficulties vanished. For this offence, as well as on the general charge of irreverence to his superiors, and as *rixæ auctor*, Ingram received a sentence similar to that lately pronounced on Mason. Parne, being produced, among others, as an evidence in this enquiry, had a sharp altercation with Bentley, and complained of his bringing up against one of the Fellows a silly story of such old standing: to which the Master made this pithy reply, "You are now prosecuting *me* for things done thirty years ago."

Feb. 26,
1730-31.

This last exercise of power was not suffered to pass unquestioned. Bentley's prosecutors thought that its discussion might advance their cause: accordingly, Ingram lodged an appeal against the Master and senior-dean before the Bishop of Ely, praying him, as Visitor, to reverse so unjust a sentence. Bishop Greene wrote a letter to Dr. Bentley, not command-

ing, but advising him to suspend the execution of the sentence till the question of the visitatorial power, then pending before the Court of King's Bench, had been decided.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1730.

These petty hostilities had no result except to aggravate the evils and distractions by which the College was torn : they neither accelerated nor retarded the progress of the great cause, which was winding its deliberate course through the Court of King's Bench. In the Michaelmas term of 1730 the objections of Dr. Bentley to Bishop Greene's proceedings, were fully argued on three several days, by Mr. Greaves and Dr. Andrews on his side, and by Mr. Harper and Dr. Henchman for the opposite party. At the conclusion of the argument the four Judges delivered their opinions in order, and concurred in rejecting two of his pleas, relating to the King's pardon and the corporate acts : they all held that the Act of Grace related only to offences against the public laws of the realm ; but did not apply to breaches of College statutes, which were private laws, enacted only for the government of one particular house, and were cognizable by no jurisdiction except that of a Visitor. As to the other plea, they were unanimous in deciding that it was no defence against such charges to allege that they were corporate acts ; that every member of the corporation was answerable to his Visitor for his own actions ; that if a measure was criminal, it was the duty of the Head to have resisted it ; and that it was no apology to allege that others had concurred in its execution. Upon the remaining point, the alleged jurisdiction of the Crown as Visitor of the whole College, their Lordships were not prepared to deliver a judgment : this was accordingly postponed for a future discussion.

Court of
King's
Bench over-
rule Bent-
ley's pleas.

Nov. 6,
Nov. 19,
Nov. 25.

It was not till the following Easter term that a 1731.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1731.

May 11.

further hearing could be obtained: in addition to other causes of delay, the Chief Justice did not choose to hear a matter of such importance except when all his brethren were upon the bench. This long-agitated case now suddenly assumed a novel complexion. When the counsel were proceeding to speak upon the articles of accusation, the Judges directed their attention to another question that must previously be settled—the validity of Queen Elizabeth's statutes, upon which they were grounded. Their Lordships all declared their opinion, that the Bishop of Ely was Visitor of the whole College, by virtue of the original statutes of King Edward. It may be remembered that Lord Raymond, the Chief Justice, when Solicitor General in 1711, had concurred in an opinion that the Crown was General Visitor of Trinity College: he now candidly declared in court, that upon fuller information he had seen cause to change that opinion, and was not ashamed to acknowledge his former error. Mr. Justice Lee entertained the strongest scruples about going any further with the case: it seemed to him that the Crown, having once constituted the Bishop of Ely Visitor, possessed no more jurisdiction to grant, and had neither power to revoke that authority, nor to promulgate new statutes for the government of the College. Since neither the plaintiff's nor defendant's counsel were instructed to dispute the authority of the latter statutes, the remainder of the cause consisted principally of the Judges' remarks to the bar and to one another, upon the difficulty which they had struck out. As Elizabeth's statutes are those by which the College has been governed ever since their promulgation, and which all the Society are sworn to obey, the notion of overturning them by a judgment of the Court threatened not only to terminate the present

action, but to dissolve the whole frame of the institution. Their Lordships however were not agreed in their views of this question. But another point soon occurred to the Court, which enabled them to dispose of the case by an unanimous judgment. In the original citation, wherein the Bishop had summoned Dr. Bentley to answer to the articles alleged against him, he had styled himself 'Visitor *specially authorized and appointed* by the 40th of Queen Elizabeth's statutes to examine the Master,' &c. The Court held that this description of his powers was incorrect, since he was already the Visitor, and authorized to examine the Master, by King Edward's statutes: this inaccuracy they judged to be fatal to the whole subsequent proceeding: therefore, although they had overruled every one of the Master's exceptions to the Bishop's exercise of his jurisdiction, yet they thought this flaw, which they had discovered themselves, was a reason for continuing the prohibition upon the Bishop. In Trinity term Lord Raymond ended the case, by delivering the judgment of the Court: his speech, of which a copy has been preserved, exhibits great clearness and ability; but the point itself, upon which the judgment was founded, is of a very narrow description. The Judges were decided in their opinion that the Bishop of Ely, having been made by King Edward, the immediate heir of the founder, General Visitor of Trinity College, continued possessed of that power in as unrestricted a manner as any Visitor could enjoy it; that Queen Elizabeth's 40th statute did not and could not appoint him Visitor over the Master, since he was such already; but only recognized him in that capacity. Upon the question of the validity of Elizabeth's statutes his Lordship did not consider it necessary to give an opinion, since all his brethren agreed with

CHAP.
XVIII.
1731.

Continue
the prohibi-
tion on
Bishop
Greene.

CHAP.
XVIII.
1781.

him in thinking the inaccurate expression of the citation a sufficient cause for continuing the prohibition.

Such was the termination of this long cause, which cost Colbatch and the other prosecutors little less than 1000*l.*; while Bentley's expenses, paid out of the College-chest, amounted to 1300*l.* By the complaining party this result was considered as no less than a denial of justice. None but professional persons could appreciate the force of a technical objection, which was thus made to counterbalance all the substantial and admitted merits of the case: the exception to the words 'specially authorized and appointed' appeared to the unlearned rather to resemble a piece of verbal criticism, than the solemn judgment of a high tribunal upon a question which had been pending before it above two years. Even to lawyers the flaw was not very obvious: it had not been discovered by any of Dr. Bentley's counsel, nor even by the Judges themselves till the very close of the case, when there was no opportunity for the Bishop's counsel to argue in defence of the words. Nay, even some legal characters did not hesitate to declare their belief that the judgment, although emanating from such high authority, was bad in law. It added to the hardship of the case, that the prosecutors had to pay the Doctor 289*l.* as costs; although the whole expense had been contracted in discussing his objections, every one of which the Court had decided to be invalid.

CHAPTER XIX.

Situation of affairs after the decision of the Court of King's Bench—Bentley's petition to the King—The Attorney-general's fiat refused—The case carried by Writ of Error to the House of Lords—Difficulties of the prosecutors—Fire in the Cottonian Library—Origin of Bentley's edition of Milton—His want of qualification for that work—Fiction of Milton's reviser—No intentional deceit practised—Presumptuous character of his notes—The general disapprobation—Real merits of Bentley's Milton—Publications against it—Pearce's Review—Bentley patronized by Lord Carteret—Colbatch's tract on the Visitation Power—Mr. Porter Thompson—The case between Bishop Greene and Dr. Bentley argued in the House of Lords—Bishop Sherlock speaks against the Master—The Lords reverse the judgment of the King's Bench—The articles discussed separately—The case adjourned to another session—Bentley commences an edition of Homer—The Lords prohibit some and confirm other articles—Commencement of Bentley's second trial at Ely House—His defensive plea—Expense of the defence—Dr. Bentley sentenced to be deprived of his mastership—Bentley resists the execution of the sentence—Continues to act as Master—Hacket the Vice-master resigns—Walker succeeds—Probable error in the Statute—Colbatch petitions the House of Lords—Compromise between Bentley and part of the Prosecutors—Colbatch renews the suit—Court of King's Bench grant a mandamus addressed to Dr. Walker—Death of Dr. Davies—Destruction of his Notes on Cicero's Offices by fire—Contest for the Vice-chancellor's office.

DR. BENTLEY, although he obtained a decision in his favour, did not enjoy much opportunity for triumph. All his positions had been overruled by the Judges; who had besides unequivocally pronounced that the Bishop was General Visitor of the whole College, and could execute that office at his discretion. It was now expected that a visitation would forthwith take place; and Colbatch drew up a set of articles or interrogatories, which, to prevent cavil, were

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

Situation of
affairs after
the decision
of the Court
of King's
Bench.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

July 20.

July 27.

Bentley's
petition to
the King.

grounded upon the statutes both of Edward and of Elizabeth. The Master was again thrown upon his resources, to avert a danger which appeared to be great and imminent. The Bishop's plan of proceeding however was not settled: he went to Cambridge in July, and was there considering the course to be adopted: but Bentley did not wait the result of his deliberation; he sent Dr. Hacket and Dr. Walker to ask him whether it was his intention to visit Trinity College during the vacation. The ambassadors waited upon his Lordship at Bene't Lodge to put this question; but in their anxiety to uphold the dignity of the personage whom they represented, they seem to have forgotten that of him whom they addressed; and the prelate, offended at their behaviour, refused to give them any answer. As the courts of law were not sitting, the Master announced to the Bishop his intention of immediately moving the Court of Chancery for a writ of prohibition under the Great Seal, to prevent his exerting any visitatorial power over himself or his college. But in three days he saw occasion to change his measures, and declared his intention of petitioning the King to command the Attorney-general to issue his *fiat*, prohibiting the Bishop's visitation: he lost no time in presenting such a petition, taking his old ground of allegation, that the Crown only was Visitor, and that the Royal jurisdiction was invaded by the Bishop. The Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State, sent the petition to the Attorney and Solicitor General, with the King's orders to report their opinion of its merits: and those gentlemen, Sir P. Yorke, and Mr. Talbot, appointed an early day for hearing the counsel of all the parties concerned in the question. Nothing in the whole proceedings gave so much displeasure to Bishop Greene, already sufficiently prejudiced against

the Master, as this fresh attempt at litigation. He says, in a letter to Mr. Harper, one of his lawyers :

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

“ I am sufficiently convinced that all which the Doctor’s counsel have hitherto done, was purely to create delays, to make it as long as possible before this affair can be finally determined : which is the hardship I complain of ; since it occasions an infinite expense, and all this while prevents the discipline of the College to be taken care of as it ought to be ; which is of so great consequence to that University and to the whole kingdom likewise. I have great reason to complain of Dr. Bentley’s petition to the King for a prohibition against my proceeding against him and the College during the vacation of the term, contrary to my promise to the Council ; which is all a suspicion of his own ; for I never yet gave the least occasion to him, or any one else, to suspect it, by any thing that I have said or done ; only that I refused to give any answer to two impertinent men, whom he sent to me, to ask me the question whether I designed it.”

The merits of Bentley’s petition underwent two hearings before the Attorney and Solicitor-general ; where, among other evidence, was produced the original copy of King Edward’s statutes, with proofs that the signature was in the hand-writing of that King himself. After an argument, the Attorney and Solicitor decided that the *fiat* prayed for by the Master would be illegal and unprecedented.

The Attorney-general’s *fiat* refused.

Aug. 14.

The question with the Doctor’s prosecutors now was, in what way the suit might be renewed with best prospect of success ; for no one thought of retreat. Perhaps it may have occurred to some of my readers, that it would have been an easier, cheaper, and safer method, to have introduced a bill into Parliament to ascertain the visitatorial power over Trinity College, than to endeavour to establish, by protracted litigation, a point upon which the greatest legal authorities had disagreed with one another and with themselves. In fact this plan was thought of, and the heads of a bill for the purpose are found among

The case carried by writ of error to the House of Lords.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

Dr. Colbatch's papers; but, I apprehend, it was deemed impossible to carry such an Act through the two Houses without the countenance of Government; of which there was not the slightest probability. The choice lay therefore between two methods: the Bishop of Ely might, in the character of General Visitor, summon the Master to answer articles of complaint against him, and then contest a new action of prohibition which was certain to ensue; or he might appeal to the House of Lords to reverse the late judgment of the Court of King's Bench. After much deliberation the latter course was adopted, and a Writ of Error was sued out.

This proceeding was singularly daring: a person must be very sanguine who could expect the House of Peers to overturn a judgment pronounced by an unanimous bench, in the highest tribunal of common law, upon a point of which lawyers only could form an opinion. Nor did it escape notice, that Lord King, who as Lord Chancellor must be principal judge in the appeal, was a friend and patron of Dr. Bentley¹.

Difficulties
of the pro-
secutors.

The immediate difficulty was to ensure funds for the still-increasing expenses of the prosecution. The efforts already made by the few Fellows associated in this cause, were so much greater than could have been expected from persons in their station, as to be a matter of general surprise. Bishop Greene had thus far been indemnified; but they could give him no security for the expense of future litigation, except their personal promise: and in case of the death of Colbatch, whose health was precarious, it was

¹ He had recently given the living of Stanwick, in Northamptonshire, to Bentley's son-in-law, Mr. Denison Cumberland. The Doctor in his correspondence with his nephew Thomas while abroad, communicated to him his great intimacy with the Lord Chancellor.

probable that the confederacy would fall to pieces. His Lordship required, therefore, a bond from Dr. Colbatch and Mr. Edward Smith, the only two of any substance, to bear him harmless to the amount of a thousand pounds. This was decidedly refused by Smith; who, though liberal to an extreme in his contributions to the cause, declined to submit himself to a perilous obligation². Colbatch however found means to satisfy the prelate. Subscriptions were

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

² The following sentences are extracted from Smith's letters to Colbatch:

Sept. 20, 1729. "I received your letter of the 14th instant, and in answer thereunto have sent you inclosed a bill for fifty pounds.—I must beg the favour of you to let me know how to direct to you when you are in town, and I will take what care I can not to be wanting in any thing that I can contribute towards the welfare and prosperity of Trinity College." *March 3, 1730-31;* in reference to the Bishop's demand for security, he says, "In the way that I am in at present, I know what I do. The cause that we are engaged in I shall readily assist to the utmost of my power; but I must desire to be excused if I reserve to myself the liberty of judging when I can do no more." *April 14, 1731.* "I take this opportunity of sending you, together with my best wishes for your success, the inclosed note for 50*l.* and shall beg the favour of a line or two, that it is come safe to hand."—"If the worst his Lordship seems to apprehend should really come to pass, and our cause at last must fall upon us, I shall not be wanting in my endeavours to make the weight of it as easy to every body as I can; but I shall not willingly put myself under the power of any man." *Feb. 8, 1731-32.* "If I can be of any service to you by a little supply or so, be pleased to give me your directions, and I will see what may be done." *March 14, 1731-32.* "I received a few days since a letter from Mr. Johnson, desiring some further aids and assistance. I did design to write to him to-morrow by some neighbour that should go to Royston market; but having, I think, at present the opportunity of a much safer conveyance, I shall take the convenience of it, and send a note for 30*l.* to you, as I intended to have sent to him. The expense that you are likely to be at in this way (i. e. in the appeal to the House of Lords) or how you are provided for it, is what I cannot so much as guess at; but if what I have offered be not sufficient to the business of this journey, I should be very sorry if you should mince the matter, and not acquaint me with it; assure yourself, upon the first notice, I shall endeavour to supply you further." *June 2, 1732.* "I send you inclosed a note upon Mr. Thomas Blackman, for seventy pounds. The money is already in his hands, and will, I dare say, be forthcoming whenever you shall think fit to demand it."

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

certainly given and renewed from several quarters ; but who supplied those external resources, I cannot ascertain³. It is not improbable that assistance came from Gooch, Middleton, Ashton, and other members of the University whom we have met with in a character unfriendly to the Doctor ; and I find reason to suppose that pecuniary aid was sent from the Earl of Oxford, son of the late Lord Treasurer, and Dr. Lockier, the Dean of Peterborough, an old Fellow of Trinity College who is stated to have been a hearty friend to ‘ the cause.’

Fire in the
Cottonian
Library.

It was at this period that a disaster befell the library under Dr. Bentley’s care, which was near proving an irreparable loss to literature and the world. The King’s and Cottonian collections had been removed from Cotton House, first to Essex House, near Temple Bar, and lately to Abingdon House, in Little Dean’s Yard, adjoining Westminster School, which had been purchased for that purpose. In this house, which was kept by a Mr. Bently, a fire broke out in the night of Oct. 23 ; it did much damage to the Cottonian collection, and was very near destroying the whole united treasures. Dr. Bentley happened to be in town, and hastened to rescue from the flames what he justly considered the palladium of the library, the Alexandrian manuscript of the Scriptures ; and Dr. Freind, a witness of the fire, describes in a letter his figure coming out of the house in his night-gown, his great wig, and the *codex* under his arm⁴. The number of

³ In the course of the extensive correspondence which I have seen relative to this prosecution, there is hardly any mention of contributions, except in the letters of Mr. Smith. But it is certain from other evidence, that several persons, and some of eminence, did contribute. I presume therefore that their names were kept secret, and all documents relating to the subject immediately destroyed.

⁴ This is said to be the only anecdote, worth notice, which is contained in Dr. R. Freind’s letters to Lady Sundon. *Nichols’ Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ix. p. 592.

volumes destroyed or greatly injured by the flames was above two hundred. After this catastrophe the two collections were removed to the Old Dormitory at Westminster, their last migration before the year 1752, when they were given to the British Museum, and found a resting place in Montague House.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

At this crisis, while he was awaiting the session of the great tribunal by whom his fate was to be determined, Dr. Bentley employed himself in the most extraordinary and disastrous of his literary undertakings, his edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It will be expected that I should give some account of an enterprise, which is without parallel in the history of literature, and which at first sight argues mental aberration, or the dotage of talent. The facts of the case I believe to have been these: the idea of correcting a poem, which from the blindness of its author, might be supposed to have suffered some injury in the transcription and the press, originated with Elijah Fenton, Pope's coadjutor in the translation of the *Odyssey*: he published in 1725 an edition of Milton, containing many changes in the punctuation, and some substitutions for words which he imagined might, from similarity of sound, have been misapprehended by the amanuensis. This performance seems to have led Bentley to exercise his critical ingenuity in some corrections of the poem, which he mentioned to his intimates; for I find that a report was spread shortly afterwards of his design to write notes upon the text of Milton⁵. The idea was probably soon abandoned; but the mention of it might have suggested to Queen Caroline the wish that the great critic would exercise

Origin of
Bentley's
edition of
Milton.

⁵ Dr. Ashenurst, who, being in ill health, was at Bristol about 1726, published this fact in conversation. See *Gent. Mag.* vol. ii. p. 754. He died in 1733; whereupon the Master nominated Mr. Walter Titley to succeed him in his lay-fellowship.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

his talents upon an edition of the prince of English poets, and thus gratify those readers who could not enjoy his celebrated lucubrations on classical writers. Her Majesty having expressed her pleasure that Dr. Bentley should undertake such a work, he immediately complied ; having the double motive of obedience to the Queen's commands, and a wish to bring his literary merits immediately before the noble judges, who were in a few months to become the arbiters of his fate.

His want of
qualifica-
tion for this
work.

He took up the text of *Paradise Lost* with the determination of not only detecting every slip of language in a poem whose author was unable to revise what he had dictated in his moments of inspiration, but also of noting for rejection all the instances of bad taste or incorrect imagery that his lynx-eyed criticism could discover. For a person who was neither a poet, nor possessed of poetical taste, to venture upon such a task, was no common presumption : but it would have been well had he stopped here. Wishing that *Paradise Lost* should be read in his edition agreeably to his notions of a perfect poem, he proposed, in every case, his own alterations of Milton's verses, printed in the margin. For such an undertaking, which hardly any endowments or acquirements could justify, Bentley wanted almost every qualification. He not only was destitute of poetical talent, but had contracted an aversion to the rapturous flights of genius and glowing language which distinguish the divine poem. Scarcely ever was he able to sympathize with the author ; and was, besides, frequently ignorant of his allusions and the source of his phrases and imagery. Of the works of the Italian poets, to which *Paradise Lost* is greatly indebted, Bentley knew nothing : and with the writers of romance, who had been the delight of Milton's earlier years, and from whom many of his allusions

are drawn, he was equally unacquainted. To have ventured upon an undertaking for which he wanted such indispensable qualifications, and put to hazard his eminent reputation, upon a ground where he was under every disadvantage, appears a wanton prodigality of credit; and is hardly to be accounted for, without considering the peculiar circumstances which impelled him to an immediate compliance with the wishes of her Majesty.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

The method in which his censures on Milton were delivered corresponded with the presumptuous and revolting nature of the criticisms themselves. He devised an imaginary personage in the character of an 'editor of Paradise Lost,' some nameless friend of its author, who had corrected the press: to him, and not to Milton he pretends to attribute all those faults and defects which he so confidently points out. Of course it is presumed that the author never heard the poem read over; not even when a second edition was published seven years after the first; and that all the forgeries of the editor, consisting of the substitution not only of words, but a multitude of whole verses, and the introduction of many passages of ten or twenty lines together, were palmed upon the world as the offspring of Milton's genius, without the knowledge or suspicion of the blind poet himself. This monstrous hypothesis is thus propounded in the preface:

Fiction of
Milton's re-
viser.

"Our celebrated author, when he composed this poem, being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and, what is worst of all, blind with a *gutta serena*, could only dictate his verses to be writ by another. Whence it necessarily follows, that any errors in spelling, pointing, nay even in whole words of a like or near sound in pronunciation, are not to be charged upon the poet, but on the amanuensis."—

"But more calamities, than are yet mentioned, have happened to our poem: for the friend or acquaintance, whoever he was, to whom Milton committed his copy and the overseeing of the press, did so

CHAP. vilely execute that trust, that Paradise, under his ignorance and
 XIX. audaciousness, may be said to be twice lost. A poor bookseller, then
 1731. living near Aldersgate, purchased our author's copy for ten pounds, and (if a second edition followed) for five pounds more: as appears by the original bond, yet in being. This bookseller, and that acquaintance, who seems to have been the sole corrector of the press, brought forth their first edition, polluted with such monstrous faults as are beyond example in any other printed book."—

"But these typographical faults, occasioned by the negligence of this acquaintance, (if all may be imputed to that, and not several wilfully made) were not the worst blemishes brought upon our poem. For this supposed friend, (called in these notes the editor), knowing Milton's bad circumstances; who (vii. 26.)

'Was fall'n on evil days and evil tongues,
 With darkness and with dangers compass'd round
 And solitude;'

thought he had a fit opportunity to foist into the book several of his own verses, without the blind poet's discovery. This trick has been too frequently played; but especially in works published after an author's death. And poor Milton in that condition, with threescore years' weight upon his shoulders, might be reckoned more than half dead."

This theory involved so many obvious improbabilities, was so totally unsupported by evidence, and so little reconcilable with the memoirs which have been preserved of Milton's life, that it was not to be expected that any one should acquiesce in it; nor can it be imagined that Bentley himself seriously believed its reality. Upon this point Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his 'Life of Milton,' calls in question the moral character of the critic:

"The generality of my scheme," says he, "does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley, perhaps better skilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtrusions of a revisor, whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ; a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, *as is said*, he in private allowed it to be false."—*Johnson's Life of Milton.*

I cannot consider this view of the question correct ; or think that the Doctor subjected himself, in this unfortunate performance, to the charge of designing to propagate deliberate falsehood. In my opinion, the ideal agency of the reviser of *Paradise Lost*, was only a device to take off the odium of perpetually condemning and altering the words of the great poet : he seems to have thought that the readers of his notes could better endure the censure of a nameless editor, than of Milton, the glory of our country. At the same time, he was neither deceived himself, nor intended to deceive others : he never really believed that all those exquisitely harmonious similes and digressions in *Paradise Lost*, containing allusions to classic or romantic fables, or all the long enumerations of proper names in musical arrangement, were the offspring of some corrector of the press, hired by the blind poet in Bunhill-fields. But the fact was, that however delightful they are to the ear, he deemed them out of place, and blemishes to the poem ; and thought that he might decree their rejection with less offence to the reader, by assuming them to have been the interpolation of an editor, unknown and unsuspected by Milton himself. It is true that this machinery was clumsy and ill-devised, presenting an unexampled instance of failure in judgment : but Bentley was no more impeachable for a moral fraud, than the dramatist who introduces a fictitious character into the action of an historical play.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

No intentional deceit practised.

The execution of this extraordinary project of our critic kept pace with the infelicity of the conception. His censures of Milton, nominally levelled against the editor or corrector, are pronounced in so flippant and presumptuous a tone, and in language so contemptuous and even insolent, that, if regarded in a serious light, they become perfectly insufferable. It

Presumptuous character of the book.

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

seems as if Bentley had determined to justify, by this performance of his old age, the ridicule long ago thrown upon his commentaries on Horace in different publications which we have had occasion to notice. The jocular and bantering style of his criticisms is particularly exceptionable, from its inconsistency with the sacred subject of the poem, and offends those feelings with which the reader of Milton is sure to be possessed. Almost every thing that he chooses to censure in the poem, is placed in a ludicrous point of view : and as such buffoonery is not unfrequently employed upon passages comprising the most awful allusions, it is difficult to acquit him of irreverence and profaneness, in allowing such a licence to his pen ⁶.

⁶ This is, I admit, a severe condemnation of our critic; but I think that his notes upon the following passages, among many others, will prove that it is not unmerited. Book IV. 269. Raphaël

“ Now on the polar winds, then with quick fan
Winnows the buxom air ; till within soar
Of tow’ring eagles, to all the fowls he seems
A phoenix, gaz’d by all, as that sole bird,
When to enshrine his reliques in the Sun’s
Bright temple, to Ægyptian Thebes he flies.”

This passage Bentley rejects as spurious, observing, “ When our editor once begins with his similitudes, he knows not when to leave off ; but still blunders on, through sense or nonsense. Milton said, ‘ Raphael sail’d between worlds and worlds,’ wisely steered through the vacuous ether that lay between them. But the editor, in contradiction, tells us, he sailed ‘ sometimes on the polar winds ;’ which winds could not exist, but within those worlds. And then, when he came so near the earth, as eagles used to soar, he took the shape of a phoenix ; and three verses are bestowed on the story of this phoenix. But why that shape, good master Editor ? Why, says he, to deceive all the fowls, who look and gaze at him as a true one. Was that a whim fit for an Archangel, sent from heaven to earth on so important a commission ? Is not this rare trifling ? and among so many real birds of grand magnitude and fine feather, could none content you but a phoenix, a fictitious nothing, that has no being but in tale and fable ?”

“ Of elements

The grosser feeds the purer, earth the sea,
Earth and the sea feed air ; the air those fires
Ethereal, and as lowest first the Moon :

[Whence

The haste with which his notes were despatched would have been evident to the reader, even if Bent-

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurg'd
Vapours not yet into her substance turn'd.
Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
From her moist continent to higher orbs.
The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives
From all his alimantal recompense
In humid exhalations; and at ev'n
Sups with the Ocean."

B. V. 415.

This, too, is rejected with the following note: "Our author should have taken great care what notions, what points of philosophy, he put into the mouth of an Archangel. Not to examine what he has said here, 'Know, that whatever was created,' even spirits immortal, 'needs to be sustained and fed.' This doctrine may pass in Heaven, where nectar and ambrosia are always in plenty; but how will it do in Hell? If the Devils want feeding, our author made poor provision for them in his Second Book, where they have nothing to eat but 'hell-fire,' and no danger 'of their dinner cooling.' To pass this over; yet what he subjoins, from a catch in Anacreon, Ἡ γῆ μέλαινα πίνει, &c. paraphrased by Mr. Cowley, is not to be borne. Our air, our atmosphere, he says, 'feeds the Moon first,' as the lowest of planets. Thin diet for her truly, and thinner for those above her; for before the highth of her orb, it is a million times thinner than on the top of the Andes, where no animal can breathe. But, ἐπὶ φακῇ μύρον, to mend the matter, he adds a fine observation on it: 'thence,' says he, 'those spots are seen in the Moon's visage, which are vapours unpurg'd, not yet turn'd into her substance.' I find she has a poor stomach, or a very slow digestion; for her food, the very same spots, have stood upon her table untouched for thousands of years, ever since this Angel then spied them. Well, but though the Moon in so many ages has eat so little herself, yet she has out of her moisture fed the higher stars, and the Sun too is fed by 'humid exhalations.' This is Anacreon exactly:

'The Sun himself, as one would guess
By his drunken fiery face no less,
Drinks up the sea; and when that's done,
The higher stars drink up the Sun.'

But, above all, thank our Editor for that, 'the Sun every evening sups with our Ocean:' no doubt of it; and, as the poets vouch, Thetis washes and rubs down his horses. But this Sun, methinks, is but a cannibal sort of guest, to swallow up his own host. I own, to see such stuff as this, delivered by an Archangel, raises my indignation:

Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.

But I hold to that point, that Homer himself did not write this, but Chœrilus, his editor."

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

ley had not told him in the preface that they were written *extempore*, and sent immediately to press. In the twelfth Book he pretends that the supposed editor had taken fewer liberties with Milton than in any of the preceding, and had therefore spared him the trouble of noticing his enormities: but the reader perceives plainly enough the real fact, that it was not the want of topics, but the approach of the session of Parliament, which led him to pass the last Book almost untouched, and hurry the publication of his volume. It appears however that, although impelled by a strange infatuation to fling away his credit in this ill-imagined and preposterous adventure, he was not blind to its almost certain consequences. His nephew, Richard, to whom was allotted the task of correcting the press, foresaw the result, and earnestly dissuaded the publication; but in vain⁷. In noticing the two last lines of the poem, and Addison's suggestion for their erasure, Bentley thus alludes to his own undertaking, and the Royal commands which had imposed it upon him:

“ ‘*If I might presume,*’ says an ingenious and celebrated writer, ‘*to offer at the smallest alteration in this divine work*’—If to make one small alteration appeared to be so *presumptuous*, what censure must I expect to incur, who have presumed to make so many? But *jacta est alea*; and *non injussa cecini*:

Παρ’ ἐμοίγε καὶ ἄλλοι
Οἱ κε με τμήσουσι, μάλιστα δὲ μηγίετα Ζεύς.”

A similar defiance of the censures which he foresaw, is expressed in the concluding sentence of the preface:

“Who durst oppose the universal vogue, and risk his own cha-

⁷ This fact I learned from Mr. Bentley Warren, to whom it was communicated by Dr. R. Bentley himself.

racter, while he laboured to exalt Milton's? I wonder rather, that it is done even now. Had these very notes been written forty years ago, it would then have been prudence to have suppressed them, for fear of injuring one's rising fortune. But now when seventy years *jamdudum memorem monuerunt*, and spoke loudly in my ears,

CHAP.
XIX.
1731.

Mitte leves spes et certamina divitiarum;

I made the notes extempore, and put them to the press as soon as made, without any apprehension of growing leaner by censures, or plumper by commendations."

In this preface, while speaking of Milton's power of abstracting his mind from his own troubles, and, 'surrounded as he was with cares and fears, spatiating at large through the whole compass of the universe,' Bentley makes a palpable allusion to his own situation, and the calmness which he was able to maintain amid the ill-usage and persecutions with which he thought himself beset:

"This theory, no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction; but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace. And it would almost seem to me to be peculiar to him, had not experience by others taught me, that there is that power in the human mind, supported with innocence and *conscientia virtus*, that can make it quite shake off all outward uneasiness, and involve itself secure and pleased in its own integrity and entertainment."

The new *Paradise Lost* appeared in a handsome quarto volume just before the day on which the session of Parliament was opened^s. The punctuation is more correct than in any former edition: and the text of Milton is given with no other alteration, except that the words which Bentley was pleased to condemn are

Appearance
of the pub-
lication.
January,
1731-32.

^s The book was printed for Jacob Tonson and other booksellers; who, it is said, gave the Doctor 100 guineas for the edition. If this be true, I apprehend it was a larger sum than he ever received for any other of his publications. The price of each copy was a guinea.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

printed in italics, and the many passages which he ordered to be struck out of the poem, are enclosed between brackets. No words can describe the feelings of the public at the amazing audacity of this attempt, in which the bad taste of the alterations was rendered more intolerable by the flippant arrogance of the commentary. The admirers of Milton found many of his most harmonious passages condemned as the productions of some silly, senseless blockhead, his learning treated with contempt, his poetical expressions taken to pieces, not without harsh abuse, and converted into heavy prose; and, as if the critic's classical predilections were in abeyance for the time, the imitations of Greek and Latin poets, their phrases and idioms, with which Milton abounds, were generally proscribed in terms of banter and insult⁹.

⁹ Of this many instances might be given: in fact there is hardly a passage in *Paradise Lost*, where classical allusion, or any other description of learning, is employed, which Bentley does not propose to expunge as unworthy of the poet; and in so doing, certainly contrives to lop off many of the most beautiful parts of the poem. I will give but two instances, taken casually, and without selection. The first is his note upon B. IV. 323.

“Adam, the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.”

“I'll not believe this distich to be Milton's. We have had too much trial of his busy acquaintance, to be easily imposed on. The sense is entirely expressed in the lines preceding; and the diction is very vicious. Adam ‘the goodliest of his sons,’ Eve ‘the fairest of her daughters.’ Which, in strict construction, implies him to be one of his sons, and her one of her daughters. Besides, *his* sons, *her* daughters; as if *his* sons were not *her's* too, and *her* daughters his. He might have avoided the fault of expression thus:

Adam a goodlier man than men since born
His sons, and fairer than her daughters Eve.

“But the whole is silly, superfluous, and spurious.”
The second is from B. IX. 385.

“Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a wood-nymph light

[Oread

The combined effect of all the literary attacks upon
our critic in the course of forty years had not inflicted

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

The public
disapproba-
tion.

Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd, and goddess-like deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver arm'd,
But with such gard'ning tools as art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or angels brought.
To Pales or Pomona thus adorn'd
Likeliest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove."

"Here our editor thought he had a field before him, to implant what he pleased. He seldom intermeddles in speeches, wherein Milton chiefly excels; but when any thing of description will make way for him, he'll never fail to intrude his rubbish. We have had frequent accounts of Eve's beauty already; particularly viii. 59. when leaving Raphael and Adam she went to her groves; these most noble verses fully describe her charms:

With goddess-like demeanour forth she went,
Not unattended; for on her as queen
A pomp of winning Graces waited still;
And from about her shot darts of desire
Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.

Yet now, when only she leaves Adam to go to the groves, the Editor has a prolix attempt to describe her afresh, as if nothing had been said before; and yet he falls as much below the true Milton, in book viii. as a novice sign-dauber below a Titian, or a Raphael. Let us see what fine work he makes. Instead of something real, he empties all his common-place of mythology. She walked so light (a great commendation) as any wood-nymph, Oread or Dryad, or one of Diana's train; nay, she had a finer gait than Diana herself, though she had no bow and quiver: as if carrying a heavy quiver at her back made Diana walk the more gracefully. Aye, but he alters his mind; and now she's 'likeliest (he meant *likest*) to Pales or Pomona;' and yet not to Pomona always, but when she fled Vertumnus, who would have ravished her: Eve here had no such occasion to run away so fast. Aye, but she's like Ceres too: all these, even in fable, are unlike one another; and yet Eve is like them all. But she was like Ceres, when she was a maid, and in her prime,

Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

I find the Editor's goddesses, though immortal, have the decays of old age, grow past their prime, and then grey-haired and wrinkled. But what monster of a phrase is that, 'virgin of Proserpina,' virgin of her daughter?

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

so great an injury upon his credit, as was done by this one ill-fated production of his own ; and he thus became an illustration of the truth of his own maxim, ' that no man was ever written out of reputation but by himself.' His notes on Milton excited either indignation or ridicule, according to the character and disposition of the reader. Scholars witnessed this exposure of their acknowledged chief, with shame and humiliation ; while the unlearned English reader saw reason for despising the classical knowledge and critical skill which he had so often heard extolled. In the meantime, his friends were silent ; no tongue or pen ventured to oppose in the least degree the general voice of censure. Nor has public feeling been altered by time : the work has continued for nearly a hundred years to call forth, whenever it is named, expressions of condemnation and amazement.

Real merits
of Bentley's
Milton.

When public opinion is so unanimous upon any question, it is hazardous to mention a word of exception or opposition : nevertheless it is certain that Bentley's Milton contains many just and sensible remarks, and many acute pieces of criticism, for

Any one else that was minded to speak human language, would have said,

Like Ceres in her prime,
Not mother yet of Proserpine by Jove.

But it is time to leave this animal ; and to try if we can find any mangled limbs of our poet, scattered among this dozen of lines ; *veluti disjecti membra poetæ*. These four, with some help of surgery, have the features of Milton :

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and hasten'd to the groves,
Arm'd with such gard'ning tools, as art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had form'd, or angels brought.

All the nymphs and goddesses, whether in their prime, or past it, we'll return to their right owner."

which the world allows him no credit. If any unprejudiced judge were to try the experiment of considering Bentley's remarks on Milton's text, divested of the absurd fiction of an interpolating editor, the flippant and unseemly language of his notes, and all his own proposed emendations, he would be surprised to find himself frequently compelled to acknowledge the justness of his strictures; and even when he dissented, would recognize the ingenuity of the critic. Of all great poets with whom we are acquainted, Milton was, in his earlier days, most given to the practice of correcting and polishing his verses¹⁰; and there can hardly be a doubt that, if he had retained his eyesight, he would have altered many of the words and lines against which Bentley excepts. And had similar strictures been communicated to the poet in his blindness, though he might have rejected with indignation the suggestion of omitting so many favourite passages, as well as the prosaic alterations of poetical expressions, yet he would probably have accepted many of the hints; he would have changed or omitted many flat and inharmonious verses, and removed those inconsistencies and improprieties which cannot be denied to be blemishes to his immortal work. Nay further: if Bentley's objections to the introduction of heathen mythology and northern superstitions into a poem which possesses a perfect machinery of its own, had but been expressed in decorous language, many of Milton's greatest admirers might have acquiesced in their justice; and joined with him in wishing that all those allusions, as well as the romances of the middle ages, and part of his astronomy, his geography, and his scholastic learn-

¹⁰ This fact appears conspicuously in Milton's copy of *Comus* and many of his earlier poems, which is preserved in Trinity library.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

Publications
against it.

ing, had found a place elsewhere, rather than in the divine poem of *Paradise Lost*.

It naturally followed that Bentley's publication was attacked from every quarter, and particularly by the host of small writers who swarmed at that day in unusual multitudes. The *Grub Street Journal*, and its contemporaries, continued for a long time to level severe and acrimonious abuse at this unhappy publication; and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which had recently begun its career, by extracting some of those critiques, has secured them a more permanent existence than they were entitled to expect¹¹. Of the sixpenny pamphlets which appeared in refutation or ridicule of this book, one called '*Milton Restored and Bentley Deposed*,' gave the Poet's words and Bentley's alterations in opposite columns; that every one might have an opportunity of joining in the outcry against the audacious critic. Another called '*A Friendly Letter to Dr. Bentley*,' written in ironical language, contains a very witty exposure of some of the worst and most preposterous of the alterations. The title-page says it is by '*A Gentleman of Christ-Church*;' but I suspect it to have come from a College with which Bentley was better acquainted. His hapless performance soon became the butt of every laughter, and the scandal of every lover of poetry. I shall mention only two other works in which it is censured: '*Explanatory Notes and Remarks*,' by the two Richardsons, the painters, father and son, of

¹¹ One of the wittiest as well as bitterest of the *jeu-d'esprits*, was an epigram on Bentley's applying to himself in the Preface the quotation from Virgil: *Me quoque Vatem Dicunt pastores, sed non ego credulus illis*.—It was

"How could vile sycophants contrive
A lie so gross to raise,
Which even Bentley can't believe
Though spoke in his own praise."

whom the elder is known as the friend and correspondent of Pope; and 'A Review of the Text of Paradise Lost,' by Zachary Pearce. The last is a publication of considerable value, and, in my opinion, deserves a preference over all the commentaries upon Milton. Its author had long ago shown himself not afraid of an encounter with our great critic, on the subject of his proposed edition of the Greek Testament. Pearce was at this very time engaged in a sharp dispute with Conyers Middleton relative to 'His Letter to Dr. Waterland,' the first work in which he discovered a disposition to cavil at and undermine Religion. Being very conversant with Milton, and acquainted with the sources of his poetry, he printed his remarks while the public interest was drawn to that subject, and was thus engaged at the same moment in literary contests with those two great adversaries Bentley and Middleton. His 'Review of the Text of Paradise Lost' appeared in three separate parts: it must be noticed that although he condemns the present performance of the Doctor, he treats him with the respect due to his splendid talents and reputation, even while they were suffering under an eclipse; and this moderation of tone forms a contrast to the language with which he was assailed from his other adversaries.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

Pearce's
Review.

Our literary veteran had now to encounter a more formidable ordeal than he had ever yet undergone, a contest in which both character and station were involved, before the supreme tribunal of the kingdom. He had several acquaintance among the Peers, whose support he solicited on this exigency. The person who took up his cause with the greatest decision and energy was Lord Carteret. That distinguished and eloquent statesman had, since he was last mentioned in this history, filled the station of Lord Lieutenant of

Bentley
patronised
by Lord
Carteret.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

Ireland; and the affair of Wood's Patent, and the resistance produced by the writings of Dean Swift, have made the six years of his government one of the most interesting periods in the annals of the sister island. I find no trace of his intimacy with Dr. Bentley before the last year or two; and it seems to have arisen from his Lordship's love of classical literature, and the pleasure which he took in the conversation of our veteran scholar¹². The countenance afforded to him by Royalty itself was probably not unfelt on this occasion: but the Bench of Bishops seemed in general dissatisfied with the proceedings which had taken place, and wished the cause to be decided, not upon the ground of some legal nicety, but upon its substantial merits.

Although the session was opened on the 13th of January, it was not till after Easter that their Lordships could find leisure to hear this question. As it was a Writ of Error to set aside the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, the situation of the parties was reversed: Bishop Greene was now plaintiff, and Dr. Bentley defendant: the former was represented by Mr. Fazakerley and Mr. Harper as his counsel, the latter by Sir Philip Yorke, Mr. Reeve, and Mr. Greaves. The last gentleman, although a junior

¹² The peculiar attachment to Terence, which is found among persons educated at Westminster School, might probably be the means of cementing their acquaintance. The following anecdote is told by Kippis, in the *Biographia Britannica*, vol. ii. p. 280.

"Dr. Bentley, when he came to town, was accustomed, in his visits to Lord Carteret, sometimes to spend the evenings with his Lordship. One day old Lady Granville reproached her son with keeping the country clergyman, who was with him the night before, till he was intoxicated. Lord Carteret denied the charge; upon which the lady replied, that the clergyman could not have sung in so ridiculous a manner, unless he had been in liquor. The truth of the case was, that the singing thus mistaken by her Ladyship, was Dr. Bentley's endeavour to instruct and entertain his noble friend, by reciting Terence according to the true *cantilena* of the ancients."

counsel, proved the Doctor's most useful and efficient advocate, both before the King's Bench and the House of Lords : and being not only the advocate, but the intimate and confidential friend of his client, he entered into all his feelings and gave effect to all his views.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

Before the case was argued in the House, Dr. Colbatch put forth an able pamphlet, called 'A Defence of the Lord Bishop of Ely's Visitatorial Jurisdiction over Trinity College in general, and over the Master thereof in particular.' This was an enlarged and improved draught of his former tract upon the same subject : its arguments are clear, well arranged, and almost irresistible. The author, being taught, by sad experience, took care not to allude to the august tribunal, at whose bar the question was now to be discussed.

Colbatch's
tract on the
Visitatorial
power.

It may appear surprising that Dr. Bentley should at this crisis have again gone into the Court of King's Bench : such, however, was the fact. Mr. Porter Thompson, a gentleman residing in Trinity College as Master of Arts, had some quarrel with Dr. Hacket, a personage who never let slip his interest with the Master. In consequence of this feud, as it was believed, Bentley with the assistance of Craister the senior-dean, banished Thompson from the College. He resenting this usage, entered into the party of the malcontents, and appealed to the Bishop of Ely as Visitor for redress, alleging that 'he had been expelled without having any thing objected to him, and without even a summons.' That prelate, conceiving himself to have been pronounced General Visitor by the Court of King's Bench, felt it his duty to summon the Master and Dr. Craister to appear before him on February 1, to answer the appeal, under the penalties of contempt. Bentley chose to treat the

Mr. Porter
Thompson.

Nov. 30,
1731.

Jan. 24,
1731-32.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

citation with neglect, and applied to Westminster Hall for a rule to prohibit the Bishop from inflicting the threatened penalties. The Court granted a rule for his Lordship to show cause: but before the matter was ripe for an argument, the events in the House of Peers were thought to have rendered further proceedings in this small affair unnecessary¹⁵.

The case
between
Bishop
Greene and
Dr. Bentley
argued in
the House
of Lords.

It was not until Bishop Greene had himself petitioned their Lordships to take the appeal into their consideration, that a day was fixed for the hearing; and the Judges were ordered to attend the House each time that it was discussed, to assist, if necessary, with their advice. The heads of the arguments of the plaintiff and defendant were printed in a concise form, for the consideration of the Peers; those of the latter containing the articles of accusation against the Master, as well as parts of the statutes upon which they were grounded. The interest attached to this cause, and the personage whose fortunes were at stake, produced full houses on almost every day that it was argued. On the 6th of May it was heard for the first time: the counsel for Bishop Greene, the plaintiff in error, argued that the supposed incorrectness in the words of the original citation, which was the sole ground of the judgment of the Court of

¹⁵ Porter Thompson had been a fellow-commoner of Trinity, admitted in 1725. He became M.A. at the Royal visit in 1728. The only account that I can give of this probably insignificant affair, is the following notice, from the MSS. of Will. Cole, who, when speaking of the village of Trumpington, and his friend Dr. Barnwell, who succeeded Hacket, and built the vicarage-house, says: "Dr. Hacket quitted this vicarage on a quarrel between him and Mr. Porter Thompson, whom he got Dr. Bentley to expel from Trinity College, where he was Fellow Commoner, upon an idle, frivolous affair; and Mr. Thompson, in return, insisted on his residence here; which, not suiting Dr. Hacket, he resigned it." I cannot even discover the alleged cause of his expulsion; for the feud being afterwards made up, Bentley erased the entry of his sentence in the Conclusion-book so completely, that it is hardly possible to decipher a single word of it.

King's Bench, was neither a reasonable nor legal cause for continuing the prohibition, and refusing all justice to the complainants. They maintained, first, that the words '*specially authorized and appointed* by the 40th of Queen Elizabeth's statutes,' were not incorrect; since the Bishop, though constituted Visitor by the former statutes, was then going to proceed upon the latter enactment. Secondly, 'that had the citation been defective, Dr. Bentley's appearing upon it, as he did, at the time and place appointed, would have cured the mistake.' Thirdly, that Visitors, not being tied up to any particular form of proceeding, ought not to be prohibited for informality, but only for want of jurisdiction; that in this case it was admitted that the Bishop possessed the jurisdiction, and only objected that he had given a wrong description of his authority. When the plaintiff's case had been gone through, the House adjourned, it being Saturday, and fixed the following Monday for hearing the other party. On that day Dr. Bentley's counsel spoke in answer to the arguments of their opponents, relying principally upon the topics which had been supplied to them by the Chief Justice himself in his speech on delivering the opinion of the whole Court. One of the Bishop's counsel replied: after which they were all ordered to withdraw, and it was moved that the judgment of the Court of King's Bench should be reversed, and the prohibition taken off. A debate ensued, in which the most prominent speaker was Bentley's old opponent, Sherlock, who occupied the see of Bangor. This distinguished prelate had already displayed his senatorian talents in the discussion on the Pension Bill, and other occasions; he now reasoned against the Master of Trinity with a power of argument which bore down the efforts of his supporters. The

Bishop
Sherlock
speaks
against the
Master.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

The Lords
reverse the
judgment of
the Court
of King's
Bench.

speeches have not been reported, and the journals of the House contain nothing but minutes of the proceedings: I can therefore only glean occasional hints of the debates, and notices of the divisions, from loose memoranda of persons present: it seems that Bentley's prosecutors attributed much of the unexpected success of this day to the arguments of Bishop Sherlock. Upon a division being called for, the judgment of the Court of King's Bench was reversed by a majority of twenty-eight Peers against sixteen.

The articles
discussed
separately.

May 15.

Another debate then took place upon the method of proceeding; the result was, that the counsel were called in, informed by the Lord Chancellor of the decision of the House, and asked whether they had any thing to offer. Those of the plaintiff prayed in general, 'that a Consultation might be granted,' that is, that the cognizance of the articles might be remitted to the Bishop of Ely. One of the defendant's lawyers, probably Greaves, suggested that their Lordships should examine each article of the accusation, compare it with the statutes, and give directions thereupon. After further argument at the bar, the House agreed to this suggestion, probably not being aware of the magnitude of the task which they imposed upon themselves: the effect was, that a postponement of the trial for another year became inevitable. The Peers adjourned the further proceeding in this cause to that day se'nnight: another long argument then took place at the bar upon the mode of proceeding; and their Lordships agreed, after further debate, that every article should be argued separately. The Bishop's counsel then prayed that a consultation might be granted upon the sixth article, that which accused the Master with constantly and habitually absenting himself from divine service in the chapel; this being a charge which the House considered very

flagrant. In the arguments at the bar, the extent of the Bishop's jurisdiction having been questioned, the Judges were directed to give the House their opinion upon that point. After learning from those authorities that the Master's habitual absence from chapel was a violation of Queen Elizabeth's statutes, and therefore cognizable by the Bishop, another debate ensued: in conclusion, it being moved that a prohibition should issue against enquiring into this article, the House divided, and a majority decided in the negative: a consultation was then granted. On the morrow the subject was resumed, when the seventh article underwent a similar discussion: this related to the negligence of the Vice-masters, and was really aimed at Baker. The Peers determined that no accusation should be submitted to the judge, which would not, if proved, be a sufficient ground for the Master's expulsion; they therefore prohibited this article; and thus ended the business of the day. The prosecutors now found a double inconvenience from the multiplicity of articles: many of the charges being insignificant in comparison with those on which the real stress was laid, raised a prejudice against their cause, and at the same time gave their opponents fresh means of increasing the duration and expense of the suit. As the method was to hear three counsel upon each head of accusation, and then debate the question in the House, one charge was as much as could be conveniently disposed of at a sitting. Accordingly, on the next day Bishop Greene's counsel acquainted the House, that in order to take up as little of their Lordships' time as possible, they were willing to waive proceeding on several of the articles. But the defendant's counsel declined this forbearance: and, after an argument, the Peers resolved that the plaintiff must proceed, article by

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

May 16.

May 17.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

The case
adjourned
to another
session.

article. The lawyers were then heard upon the eighth and ninth articles, the latter depending on the former, and accusing the Master of suffering the chaplains of the College to be non-resident: and upon these, the House ordered the prohibition to stand. As they were now within a fortnight of the end of the session, and much public business, particularly the bills relating to the frauds on the Charitable Corporation, were still pending, their Lordships found that the affairs of Trinity College must be postponed, and therefore adjourned proceedings in this cause till Tuesday in the second week of the ensuing session ¹⁴.

The reversal of the judgment of the King's Bench was a matter of great triumph to all Bentley's adversaries; though the matter was so managed, that the wished-for result was postponed and rendered doubtful. The success which had been obtained was attributed to the courage and perseverance of Dr. Colbatch, by whom the whole proceedings had been directed, and all the arguments supplied to the counsel ¹⁵.

¹⁴ Parliament was prorogued this year on the first of June, as the King was setting out to visit his German dominions.

¹⁵ The following letter is a specimen of the manner in which the news of Colbatch's success was received by Bentley's enemies at Cambridge. The writer I presume to have been Mr. John Perkins, a Fellow of St. John's College:

" Dear Sir,

May 13.

" I am obliged to you for the favour of yours, and am glad that our friends served you so effectually. Give me leave to rejoice with you, and to congratulate you upon your success. All admire your courage now, and applaud your victory, who have overcome an enemy so obstinate, so powerful, and so well-skilled in all evasive arts and stratagems. You are the common toast of the place, and it is surprising to see how the scene is altered; they who before had not virtue enough to declare against the vices of the man, are now the most zealous against him, and wish and long for justice. It is a pity that the Bishop of Bangor's speech and arguings are not taken down in writing. Pray be pleased to remember who

As soon as the parliamentary proceedings ceased for the year, the Master, who knew that much remained to be contested before a final victory could be gained over him, resumed his studies, and commenced an edition of Homer; a work which he had meditated for a few years past, and which every scholar was anxious that he should accomplish. By taking it in hand at this crisis, he supplied one more evidence of the truth of what his enemies alleged; that whenever he was in legal peril, his practice was to interest the public in his favour by some literary undertaking. Lord Carteret, who had fought his battle in the House of Peers, now encouraged and urged this design, and endeavoured to hold him pledged to its completion, by borrowing for his use all the manuscripts and other assistance which his interest and connections could procure. Our account, however, of this projected edition must be deferred, till we have described the issue of the proceedings which were pending in Parliament against the editor.

CHAP.
XIX.
1732.

Bentley
commences
an edition
of Homer.

In the month of January the House of Lords resumed the consideration of the articles; they entered, day after day, into all the minute details of academical discipline and studies, interpreted the statutes, and took upon themselves the various functions of a College Seniority. Nor do the noble senators appear to have disliked the employment; for instead of the matter being heard, as appeal cases generally are, by

1733.
The House
prohibits
some and
confirms
other
articles.

of Sir J. Cotton's friends attended. I have spent the afternoon with the Master of Jesus, who desires his service to you, and is well pleased; he says, you fought to such a disadvantage that he began to despair. I beg you will be so good as to let me have the favour of seeing you at your return to College.

"I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate and faithful servant,

"J. PERRINS."

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

Jan. 24,
1732-33.

Jan. 25.

Jan. 26.

Debate
upon Col-
lege exer-
cises.

two or three unwilling auditors, the Journals show that there was a large attendance of Peers on every day that the affairs of Trinity College were discussed, even when there was no other business before the House. Upon the first day their Lordships took into consideration the four articles, Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 13, all which related to the Master's refusing to appoint lecturers on the Catechism; and the majority determined to send Dr. Bentley to his trial upon this charge. On the morrow the fourteenth article was heard, which charged him with not allowing the vacancies in the College-preacherships to be filled up. It occupied the House the whole day; but the majority held that the preacherships were useless, and that his refusal to elect was no offence; upon this charge therefore the prohibition continued. They prohibited also the two next articles, which accused the Master of not giving away vacant livings till more than five months had passed: the statutes, to be sure, are precise and peremptory in ordering that the presentation shall be given in one month; but it was held that this was inconvenient to Fellows who might visit them to view their condition, when by reason of distance and bad roads the appointed time might be exceeded. The prosecutors then begged leave to waive the seventeenth and eighteenth articles, which accused the Master of not hearing the probationary sermons of the College preachers: this indulgence was conceded. But upon the two next, relating to the disputations in chapel, a sharp debate ensued: the Bishop of London, Gibson, maintained that the subject was one of very great importance; that the power of reasoning, and knowledge of theology, obtained by the disputants were essential acquirements; and that if the House thought lightly of them, an important exercise would be discouraged. Lord Carteret, in reply,

spoke with some respect of the religious exercises, but ridiculed those upon philosophy, as being grounded on the Physics of Aristotle. As for the articles themselves, he termed them 'the distempered frenzies of cloistered zealots;' said that a late Bishop of Ely (meaning Fleetwood) 'would have scorned to accept of such; and that no man of tolerable sense or learning could with a grave face expel a Master upon this charge, nor even admonish him, without the censure of dulness and incapacity, and the amazement of mankind.' Bishop Willis, of Winchester, spoke nearly to the same effect as his brother of London. Bishop Reynolds, of Lincoln, agreed with his Reverend brethren in considering it a subject of moment; but as this alleged neglect did not seem to him a sufficient ground for expulsion, he thought it better to vote for a prohibition. Lord Ilay doubted whether the disputations in question did not do more harm than good, and instanced the practice of the Jesuits in other countries, who adhered to the old jargon of the schools. Upon a division, the prohibition was carried by fourteen against twelve. It was then determined, by a majority of one, to sit on the following day, Saturday, contrary to ordinary practice, in order to get forward with this interesting cause. The prosecutors waived the four next articles, of which the two first concerned the lecturers of the College, and the two last that abuse of the porter's office which has been noticed in a former chapter. The House then debated the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth, which charged Bentley with violation of statute in transacting the College business at a board of eight Fellows, some of whom were neither Seniors nor deputed by Seniors: here their Lordships interpreted in favour of the Doctor; but, on the same day they came to an opposite conclusion upon the four next articles, which

Jan. 27.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

Jan. 29.

regarded the affixing the College seal at meetings where less than sixteen Fellows were assembled : for this they sent him to his trial ; and it cannot be denied that the opposite manner of deciding those two cases showed considerable discrimination. The four following articles upon the elections to scholarships and fellowships, one of them regarding Bentley's son, were withdrawn ; but a contest took place on the thirty-fifth, which charged him with not visiting the College estates ; and again, on the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh, relating to the lease of Massam House to his brother ; a matter which had been the source of as much odium as any transaction of his life : but both charges were prohibited by the Peers. It was now evident that the cause was proceeding with accelerated velocity, twenty articles having been disposed of in three days. At the next sitting Bentley's friends

Jan. 31.

proposed that the mode of proceeding should be altered, and that his counsel should speak first upon each article, in order to have the advantage of the reply. Had this suggestion been adopted, it is probable that the case would not have been got through the House in that session. The Lords however chose to persevere in the method prescribed, and proceeded to try the merits of the four articles regarding the alienation of a small piece of land in the North as long ago as the year 1713, and in conclusion they confirmed them ; but all those relating to the evasion of the Corn Act were prohibited. They advanced with

Feb. 1.

exemplary diligence through the remainder of the charges, and confirmed those respecting the granary and other buildings on the Master's premises, the country-house at Over, the alleged extravagance in the household consumption of the lodge, and the bargain with Serjeant Miller. The decision of the last question proved how different an impression it had

made on their lordships' minds from any of the others. In general the divisions had been nearly equal : this last article was confirmed without a dissentient voice. CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

The two last days of the discussion were occupied in settling the question of costs, which were claimed by Dr. Bentley. Their Lordships having ordered the attendance of the Judges, proposed to them a feigned Feb. 8. case, the answer to which was to guide their decision on this subject. They supposed a case of appeal from the Common Pleas to the King's Bench, in which the judgment of the lower court was in part reversed and in part confirmed by the higher, and enquired whether the costs would be reduced or stand undiminished. The Judges finding this a nice and difficult point, which required deliberation and research, a week was given them for consideration. The result of their opinion was in favour of giving to Dr. Feb. 15. Bentley moderated costs. It was then moved, that Bishop Greene should pay him fifty pounds on this account ; but the Doctor's friends considering that sum too small for an appeal of such length, resisted and negatived the motion : whereupon it was voted, that the Bishop, as plaintiff in error, should pay the defendant one hundred pounds as costs ; and final judgment was pronounced, giving him permission to try the Master of Trinity upon twenty of the sixty-four articles.

As the charges which were admitted comprehended most of the serious imputations against Bentley, the final result was not likely to be affected by the obstinate struggle which he had made in detail before the House of Lords. He had, in reality, gained nothing but delay ; and this was purchased by a sum little less than 1000*l*, paid from the College chest as the defendant's expenses in the parliamentary proceedings. There were still however so many difficulties

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

in the way, that a compromise was suggested to the prosecutors, as the most expedient method for the restoration of Trinity College; and it was thought that the Master, being now in extreme peril, would consent to certain conditions, of which the principal was, an immediate settlement of the society by the Bishop as General Visitor. This was recommended by Mr. Say, the confidential secretary at Ely House: but I find no mention of an overture for accommodation coming from either of the parties; nor did such a scheme suit the character either of Bentley or of Colbatch.

The prosecutors, impatient as they were to bring to a close this long protracted affair, found another and unlooked-for source of delay. The 'writ of consultation,' decreed by the Peers on the 15th of February, was not sent to the Bishop of Ely till the 31st of May, although no pains were spared in urging the Lord Chancellor to execute the order of the House. This extraordinary delay was attributed by the aggrieved party to that nobleman's partiality towards Dr. Bentley; a suspicion to which no credit ought to be given¹⁶. Whatever was the cause of this dilatory

¹⁶ The following letter from Mr. Say to Mr. Johnson, expresses the sentiments of Ely House at this treatment:

"Dear Sir,

May 12, 1733.

"I received yours of the last post, and will take care to acquaint my Lord with it, as soon as he is fit for business: at present he is very ill, and I think, as I have all along thought, in a dangerous way.

"Lord Chancellor, though he had the judgment ten days before the end of the term, has not yet finished it; though no pains have been wanting on the part of my Lord to press him to despatch. But that you can account for No remedy, therefore, but that we must stay till next term for the consultation; and who knows, as that will be a very short term, but some way or other will be found out to baffle us till the vacation?

"These are hardships, but such as you and we have been used to.

"I am, dear Sir, yours,

"FRA. SAY."

[I know

proceeding, the effect was, that the business was driven off for another twelvemonth. Bishop Greene had engaged the assistance of Dr. Audley and Dr. Cotterell, as his assessors in the approaching trial: the avocations of these gentlemen compelled them to leave town at the end of June; and one month was too short a period to bring to a close this important suit. In the meantime both the Bishop and Dr. Colbatch were in a doubtful state of health; and the death of either would probably have quashed the whole proceedings.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

The moment that the writ was obtained, Bishop Greene issued his citation to the party: and the first court was held at Ely House, on the 13th of June. Here Dr. Bentley in his seventy-second year had to undergo a second public trial upon charges which seriously affected his character. He did not think fit to obey the summons in person; but Mr. Greenly, his proctor, answered the articles, in his name, with a negative plea. The Bishop then laid down the method which he had resolved to follow. All the evidence was to be in writing: full notice of every witness brought forward by each party was to be given to their opponents, for the purpose of cross-examination: and he determined to hear only two counsel, one common and one civil lawyer on each side, respecting the several articles. The counsel of the promoter in vain petitioned his Lordship to admit oral as well as written testimony.

Commence-
ment of
Bentley's
second trial
at Ely
House.

June 13.

Ten days afterwards the Master gave in his 'De-

His defen-
sive plea.

I know not whether this seeming denial of justice might be partly attributed to the peculiar state of the Court of King's Bench this year. I observe that Lord Raymond died in March, and that for seven months there was no Chief Justice; his successor, Sir Philip Yorke, not being appointed till October. Mr. Justice Page presided in the Court during the interval, and executed the functions of the Chief.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

fensive Plea.' As this piece is on every account curious, it will be given at large in an Appendix. It exhibits the strong, clear, and peculiar style of the author, though invested with the technicalities of the civilian who reduced it into the form of a legal document. Our readers being already in possession of the plain unvarnished facts, will not always be satisfied with the defence; but they cannot fail to remark the ingenuity with which many of the charges are evaded, and a new light thrown upon the transactions. At all events, it is important to those who would form an estimate of this extraordinary man, to see his own account of those parts of his conduct upon which his moral character was peculiarly called in question.

To this plea Johnson the promoter replied: and the depositions of the different witnesses began immediately to be taken. As the majority of them were absent from London, the Bishop gave commissions to various persons to receive depositions. Of these commissioners the principal was Mr. Edmund Law, a Fellow of Christ College, who became in the fulness of time a distinguished member of the episcopal Bench.

Ord and
Clarke's
petition to
the King.

An attempt was just now made, as it was thought, at Bentley's instigation, to divert the public attention, which was fixed with intense interest upon this trial, and to induce the Crown to interfere in the affairs of Trinity College. Mr. Ord and Mr. Clarke, two Junior Fellows, whose profession was the bar, presented a petition to the King in Council, praying that he would increase the number of Lay-fellowships, or in other words, would permit more than the two specified in the statutes to remain Fellows after the appointed period, without taking Orders. The petition was sent to the Attorney and Solicitor-general

for their opinion. A day being appointed for the hearing, Dr. Bentley's prosecutors deemed it right to oppose the progress of an affair calculated to delay and obstruct the present trial. After Mr. Wynne, the counsel for the promoter, had spoken, the Attorney and Solicitor-general determined that the matter and circumstances were such, that they could not advise the King to take any proceedings upon the petition.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

July 19.

The evidence of the witnesses for the prosecution and defence, as well as the cross-examinations of each, were taken at great length. It happens that the depositions have been preserved, and have enabled me to give a distinct and impartial statement of the various transactions to which they relate; besides supplying much incidental information relative to Dr. Bentley's life, which would otherwise have been lost. Of the Fellows of Trinity, the witnesses for the prosecution were Colbatch, E. Smith, Vernon, Parne, Ingram, and Mason, with the late Fellows, Pilgrim, Malled, and Fleming: the defendant produced the evidence of Walker, Taylor, Whitehall, Holme, Webb, Allen, and J. Wilson, along with that of Baker the late Vice-master, who had recently quitted his fellowship. Many other members of the College were brought to prove the Master's almost constant neglect of chapel; and various workmen and College servants were examined upon the charges relating to the buildings and expenditure. The Doctor's defence relied principally upon the testimony of Dr. Baker, Dr. Walker, and Porter the College butler; the whole of which was given in a studied form, to bear out the positions of his 'Defensive Plea.' As these had been his principal agents, the cross-examination which they had to undergo was of an embarrassing nature. The witnesses for the prosecution were closely questioned about the contributions of

Evidence
for the pro-
secution
and de-
fence.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

themselves and others towards carrying on the cause : the juniors avowed without hesitation the sums which they had themselves subscribed, but were silent as to their knowledge of the assistance received from others. Colbatch and Smith refused to answer all such interrogatories, submitting that they were immaterial to the case.

The twenty articles upon which the House of Lords suffered Dr. Bentley to be arraigned, comprised only eight distinct heads of accusation. 1. His habitual absence from chapel. 2. The non-appointment of lecturers on the Catechism. 3. Using the College seal at meetings which did not consist of the statutable number of sixteen. 4. The sale of a piece of land belonging to the College at Kirby Kendal. 5. Extravagance in building upon the Master's premises. 6. Erecting for himself a country-house at Over. 7. The wasteful expenditure in his household. 8. The bargain with Serjeant Miller. Two of these charges, the third and fourth, appear by the evidence to have been frivolous, and failed to attach any stigma upon the accused : the mode of transacting College business with the senior Fellows upon the spot was the same as had been practised by all Bentley's predecessors ; and the want of a deputation was only the omission of a form, the observance of which must have been attended with great inconvenience. The transaction respecting the land might have been irregular, but did not involve even a suspicion of bad or corrupt motives. But upon no other of the accusations was the Master able to clear himself. The three which bore heaviest upon him, the first, sixth, and eighth, were distinctly proved, and nothing was established in his defence by which they were rebutted, or even palliated. His general neglect of chapel after the few first years of his

mastership, was established by a cloud of witnesses ; and the evidence of his physician Dr. Wallis, and his intimates Dr. Baker, Dr. Walker, and Professor Taylor, respecting his liability to catch cold, referred to a period much subsequent to that at which his neglect had commenced. An attempt had been made to cloke the affair of the country-house, which he had built at so great an expense ; after the commencement of the prosecution Bentley gave up all thoughts of ever occupying it, and the College estate at Over, the lease of which had expired, was demised to a different lessee for twenty years ; this lease included the new-built mansion, which became the farm-house, but for which no additional consideration was paid : in fact, it was proved by distinct testimony, that this house was less eligible for the occupation of a farmer than the old one which had been pulled down. It was also proved by the estimates of Newling the carpenter, and Kettle the bricklayer, that they could have put the old house into a state of repair for little more than 100*l.* ; and even that charge ought to have fallen upon the former lessee : consequently, the total expense of the new building had been a wanton waste of the College money. The agreement with Miller, and the payment of large sums of money to him and the Master, as expenses of the prosecution before Bishop Moore, were proved by mere reference to the College registers. Bentley's defence has been already mentioned in describing this transaction, (Vol. II. p. 86.) It was asserted to have taken place in compliance with the desire of thirty-three Fellows, (of whom the promoter Johnson was one) and Baker declared that the whole business had originated with himself. This assertion, had it been true, would not have

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

justified the expenditure of College money to the amount of a thousand pounds, particularly as the effect which it tended to produce was the very opposite of tranquillity; but a mere reference to the dates overturned at once all the validity of this pretence.

In alluding to the other charges, it is unnecessary to repeat the account already given of the real merits of each. The chief particulars in which the Master's conduct was to be condemned, seem to have been his arbitrary and autocratic style of effecting every object; his disregard of all statutes, rules, or customs, which stood in the way of his sovereign pleasure; his general recklessness of consequences, and contempt of opposition. In regard to his buildings in the College (with the exception of the granary, which involved a charge of a different kind), it did not appear that they were either unnecessary or extravagant; but it was proved that they were all undertaken without the sanction of that body to whom the foundation has entrusted the government and revenues of the society. Respecting the alleged waste of all household articles with which Trinity Lodge was supplied at the public charge, the Master's defence was ingenious: it was not denied that a greater consumption of such articles had taken place in Dr. Bentley's time than under any of his predecessors; but it was shown by a detailed calculation, that the average emoluments of his mastership, when compared with those of a fellowship, had not exceeded, or even equalled, the proportion which the foundation allotted to the Head. This argument, had it not been over-stated, and pressed too far, would have been a powerful reply to his accusers; although it could not justify the waste which was

incontestibly proved to have taken place in some part of his establishment ¹⁷.

CHAP.
XIX.
1733.

There was another article of expenditure, which, although it formed no part of the present accusation against Dr. Bentley, was in fact more burthensome to the College, and more destitute of colour or excuse, than any of the extravagances for which he was arraigned. I mean the expense of all his law proceedings since August 1728. Under pretence of the whole being a defence of the King's visitatorial jurisdiction, all the complicated proceedings before the Privy Council, the King's Bench, the House of Lords, and the Bishop of Ely, the greater part of which had no bearing on that question, were paid for from the common stock. Nor was this all: his own personal expenses, and those of his witnesses, were defrayed with lavish profusion from the same source. It appears by the bursar's books, that in 1733 the costs amounted to about 700*l*. and as much more in the following year. Such a continued drain

Expense of
the defence.

¹⁷ In the mode of instituting the comparison, there was a fallacy so palpable, that it is extraordinary that Bentley should have committed himself to propound it. In estimating the emoluments of the mastership, he took the average of all the years since his appointment; while in reckoning the value of the fellowship, he supposed the Fellow to be resident in commons the whole of the year, and to be in enjoyment of the largest advantages that the fellowship had ever reached. These premises being unfair, the result of the calculation was of course fallacious. Besides, he omitted to include, what ought to have formed a part of such a computation, some allowance for the furniture and internal decoration of the lodge.

The expense of coals for the lodge had in some years exceeded 100*l*. And it was much complained, that in addition to the large quantities of beer and ale supplied to the Master's family, those articles were sometimes sent for to the butteries, and then charged 'to the College head.' On these occasions, the only security against the imposition of servants was, that Madam Bentley used to send her snuff-box along with the order, as a token. But for any good purpose, she needed not have parted with that solace for a moment: the snuff-box could not tell whether she wanted a large or small quantity; that point was left to the veracity of the messenger.

CHAP.
XIX.
1734

was more than the revenues of the society could support, and the result was a considerable debt and embarrassment.

April 27.
Dr. Bentley
sentenced
to be de-
prived of
his master-
ship.

After all the witnesses' depositions had been taken, the articles of accusation were separately discussed at many successive hearings before the Bishop and his assessors. The trial being concluded, before sentence was pronounced a long demur took place: and a report transpired, that a difference of opinion prevailed between the Bishop and one or both of his assessors. At length a sitting of the Court was announced for the 27th of April, to deliver a final judgment on this long-protracted cause. The Hall being full of anxious auditors, Bishop Greene appeared without his assessors: the result being anticipated, Dr. Andrews, as counsel for the Master, immediately rose, and begged that his Lordship would defer giving sentence till his assessors could be present and deliver their opinions. This the Bishop peremptorily refused; but being asked whether they were consenting to his judgment, replied in the affirmative. He then declared in terms of great solemnity that Dr. Bentley was proved guilty both of dilapidating the goods of his College and violating its statutes, and had thereby incurred the penalty of deprivation appointed by those statutes: accordingly, he pronounced him to be deprived of the mastership of Trinity College.

Reported
dissent of
of the
Bishop's
assessors.

This sentence was by no means unexpected: but the mystery which regards the opinion of the Bishop's assessors I am not able to clear up. Immediately after the judgment was pronounced, Kenn, an agent of Bentley's, was sent to question Dr. Cotterell upon this subject. His report of the interview is the only account we possess of this affair; and being only an *ex parte* statement made for a particular purpose, and

being likewise inconsistent with the Bishop's declaration and with itself, it does not claim much consideration. Kenn says, that Cotterell first told him, he would not reveal in private his opinion upon a subject on which he had been judicially consulted; but he went on to say, that he considered Dr. Bentley to have been proved guilty upon only two of the charges, his neglect of chapel, and his bargain with Serjeant Miller, and that even these were not proved as they were laid; that, consequently, he thought he ought to have been acquitted; adding, that he believed Dr. Audley's opinion to be the same as his own¹⁸.

¹⁸ The following is the communication itself made by Kenn to Dr. Hackett, the Vice-master:

" Sir,

" *April 27, 1734.*

" As you know the Bishop came into Court without his assessors, and was rising up to pronounce judgment, Dr. Andrews thought fit to make the following motions, to which you have the Bishop's answers in his own words, as taken down by me in short hand, and agreed by the gentlemen present to be so. Viz.

" Dr. Andrews. ' Your Lordship hath had the assistance of two learned gentlemen of great judgment and integrity; who have taken great pains, and, I believe, were very exact in their notes; and it will be to the satisfaction of every body to hear their opinion before your Lordship gives your judgment, and therefore I submit it to your Lordship, whether you will not defer giving it till they are present.'

" Bishop. ' No, I sha'nt.'

" Dr. Andrews. ' Then, my Lord, I am desirous to know if they are consenting.'

" Bishop. ' They are consenting and desirous of it.'

" And as it was apprehended by most of the persons then present, who were numerous, that the Bishop meant his assessors were consenting to his judgment, it was thought proper by Dr. Andrews and Mr. Greaves, that I should wait upon Dr. Audley and Dr. Cotterel, the two assessors; which, accordingly, I did, and saw Dr. Cotterel, but Dr. Audley was just gone out of town. To Dr. Cotterel I show'd an exact copy of what is before wrote; upon reading of which, he declared that he never had, nor never would give his opinion in private in a case where he was to assist in judgment, especially in a matter of so great consequence, and that he was willing and ready to have attended this day, to have given his reasons in public, for his opinion, which was so far from agreeing with, or any ways consenting to the judgment pronounced by the Bishop, that he had not the least doubt as to any of the articles against Dr. Bentley, except

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

The supposed dissent of Bishop Greene's assessors does not appear ever to have been publicly alleged : but it was an opinion received and circulated among Dr. Bentley's friends. A statement written by Professor Lort mentions the report, adding that the Bishop was believed to have made up his mind that justice must take its course, in consequence of the Master's declaration at the last fellowship-election, when he pre-elected three persons, that if he gained his cause, he would make vacancies for them by expelling as many of his prosecutors¹⁹.

Bentley resists the execution of the sentence.

Our readers who have felt surprise at the skill and address shown by Dr. Bentley, in eluding a visitation for the last six years, will be still more astonished when they find him retaining his place in defiance of a final sentence of expulsion, emanating from a judge who was specially sanctioned and authorized by the highest tribunal in the empire. He had long formed a resolution, in case of his conviction by the Visitor, to take his stand behind the last entrenchment, and

that relating to his absenting himself from Chapel, and that relating to Serjeant Miller, and in regard to them, they were not proved as laid, and therefore as he should always think his honour and conscience concerned whenever he was to declare his opinion to lead the mind of another man to the judgment he was to give, he must have declared that Dr. Bentley ought to have been acquitted, as to them as well as to others. He further said that he never had talked with Dr. Audley in relation to this matter, till after the Bishop had been with them both separately, which was on Thursday last, and since that he had had some conversation with him about his opinion, and might venture to say that Dr. Audley was of the same opinion with him, and that he believed they would have differed very little in their reasons, if they had had an opportunity of offering them, and that he should be very sorry that the world should run away with a notion of his being consenting to the Bishop's sentence.

"This, Sir, I send to you to communicate to Dr. Bentley, or to whom you shall see occasion.

"I am, Sir, your most faithful and humble servant,

"L. KENN."

¹⁹ From a manuscript book of Professor Lort, in Gough's Collection, now in the Bodleian library.

resist the execution of the sentence. His ground consisted in the following words of the 40th statute: supposing a Master to have been convicted before the Bishop of Ely of any of the greater crimes there specified, it is directed *sine mora per eundem Vice-Magistrum officio Magistri privetur*. The execution being thus left to the Vice-master, Bentley perceived, that if the King, and not the Bishop, were presumed to be General Visitor, the Vice-master owed no allegiance to the latter, or at least could not be punished by him for disobedience. Should he, therefore, induce a Vice-master to refuse or neglect to obey the injunction, there existed no power to compel him to perform that duty; and by this means the Bishop's jurisdiction, which had been asserted with so much effort and difficulty, might be set at nought. The scheme was indeed so beset with hazard, that scarcely any one except Bentley would have seriously entertained it: it might be difficult to induce any Vice-master to stand in the breach, and expose himself to the penalties of contumacy in order to preserve his principal: or the Court of King's Bench might decide the matter by a mandamus. The Doctor had the precaution to take Mr. Reeve's opinion upon the latter point, immediately after the House of Lords had taken off the prohibition, and allowed the Bishop to exercise his jurisdiction. Mr. Reeve replied, that taking for granted that the King was Visitor, he much doubted whether the Court would grant a mandamus, and was not aware of any precedent for such an interference.

Baker had quitted his fellowship a year before, in consequence of taking the College living of Dickleborough²⁰: Walker, not being yet one of the eight

²⁰ Dr. Baker continued to reside in College, being allowed by the Mas-

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

April, 1733.
Hacket the
Vice-mas-
ter.

Seniors, could not succeed him as Vice-master : accordingly Hacket was appointed to that office. As soon as Bishop Greene had pronounced the sentence of deprivation, he transmitted one copy of it to Dr. Bentley, ordered another to be affixed to the College gates, and sent a third to Dr. Hacket, with a mandate requiring him to execute the deprivation. But the Vice-master was advised at the same time, by Bentley's counsel, to return for answer, that he would take legal advice for his conduct, and to wait the further steps of the prosecutors.

Bentley
continues to
act as Mas-
ter.

Bentley remained tranquil at his post, and in the capacity of Master summoned a statutable meeting for the 10th of May, for the election of scholars. Colbatch and all the adverse party signed a strong protest against the transaction of any business under the pretended authority of a deprived Master, declared that every act done in such circumstances was a nullity, and denounced Hacket for neglecting to execute his statutable functions, as well as every one else who should adhere to their late Head. A great proportion of the Fellows had from the beginning of the prosecution kept aloof, and absented themselves as much as possible from the scene of feuds and distractions : but of those who had sided with Bentley, I do not find that any one abandoned him in the hour of adversity. He himself, supported by a majority of the Seniors, maintained not only his spirits but his accustomed gaiety ; and in allusion to his own predicament, gave the candidates as a subject for a theme, the following words of Terence :

*hoc nunc dicis,
Ejectos hinc nos ; omnium rerum heus vicissitudo est.*

ter to hold, along with that rectory, the perpetual curacy of St. Mary's, and being pre-elected one of the conducts or chaplains. The reason assigned was, that he was embarrassed with debt.

Dr. Hacket, who had never supported the Master but with a view to his own interest, felt uneasy at the situation in which he was placed : he plainly saw the danger that he incurred by open disobedience to the statutes, and had no mind to become a victim in defence of one whom he regarded with no affection. But Bentley's ingenuity never failed him in cases of difficulty : although he could not induce Hacket to run any hazard in his behalf, yet he had sufficient interest with him to procure his immediate resignation of the Vice-mastership. It happened, most fortunately for him, that Walker had recently become one of the eight Seniors, and consequently capable of holding that office. Hereupon this devoted friend of our hero was appointed Vice-master ; and was prepared and resolved to use the power with which he was invested in maintaining his patron in his seat. His attachment to Bentley seems to have been so perfect, as to resemble the devotion of a Highland clansman to his chief ; and it is likely that he would, if necessary, have cheerfully risked his life in the protection of his Master²¹.

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

Hacket resigns.

Walker is made Vice-master.

Had the Bishop of Ely proceeded in the first instance with the prompt and summary powers of a Visitor, to enforce obedience to his mandate, and punish all attempts at evasion, it is probable that his sentence would have been executed ; but the delay of three weeks had altered the posture of affairs : there was no longer to be found *idem Vice-magister* in the

²¹ This transaction is thus recorded in the Conclusion-book :

May 17, 1734. " I, John Hacket, D.D. and present Vice-master, foreseeing many occasions of absence in the remainder of this year, do desire to resign my office of Vice-master, to the Master and Seniors, and desire they would chuse a successor :"

JOHN HACKET.

Ditto. " The Master and Seniors accepted the resignation of the late Vice-master, and appointed RICHARD WALKER, D.D. to be Vice-master the remaining part of the year."

RI. BENTLEY.

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

College : the present officer was different both in person and character from the one who had been required to execute the order for deprivation. A dissolution of Parliament had taken place about a week before the Bishop pronounced his sentence ; so that no appeal could be made to the House of Lords to enforce that authority with which they had specially invested him.

June 19.
Election to
the Convo-
cation.

It happened rather whimsically, that Bishop Greene, almost at the same moment that he pronounced upon Dr. Bentley sentence of expulsion from his College, had to address to him a summons, as his Archdeacon, to attend the new Convocation. At the election of two representatives for the parochial clergy of the diocese of Ely, a sharp contest took place; the object was to exclude Dr. Colbatch, who was nominated as one of the candidates. As the Convocation had not been suffered to transact business for the last seventeen years, and as there was little probability of its functions being renewed under the government of Sir Robert Walpole, the poll on this occasion, which drew from their homes the clergy of all parts of Cambridgeshire, seems only to have been intended as an expression of personal or party sentiment ²².

Probable
error in the
statute.

Meanwhile the deprived Master continued, to the

²² The numbers on the poll were,

Rev. Mr. Perkins, Rector of Fulbourn	40
Rev. Mr. Hetherington	36
Rev. Dr. Colbatch, Rector of Orwell	36
Rev. Dr. Basset, Rector of Balsham	29

Perkins and Colbatch appear to have had the votes of most of the High Church party : all Bentley's friends voted for their opponents. Colbatch protested against the return of Hetherington, as having voted for himself, which he (Colbatch) had not been allowed to do; and another of his voters being a perpetual curate, while a person in a similar situation had not been admitted to poll for the other side.

amazement of the public, in full enjoyment of his station, power, and emoluments²³. The real origin of this strange state of affairs I suspect to have been one of those small occurrences, which are sometimes found to produce great and disproportionate results. It is highly probable that the mention of the Vice-master in this part of the statute of deprivation was nothing more than a clerical error, and that instead of '*per eundem VICEMAGISTRUM*,' the framers of the statutes had designed to enact, '*per eundem VISITATOREM officio Magistri privetur*;' but that the clerk who transcribed the fair copy from the original draught, either had his eye caught by the word *Vicemagistrum* in the former paragraph, or was deceived by the similarity of the abbreviated form of the words, and thence wrote *Vicem*, as it stands in the authentic copy. If the reader will cast his eye over the latter part of the statute, which is given in Vol. I. p. 250. and observe the recurrence of the words *coram dicto Visitatore aliquando examinatus*,—*coram prædicto Visitatore legitime convictus*, he will probably agree that we should expect the next sentence to be—*per eundem Visitatorem officio Magistri privetur*: particularly as the Vice-master is not otherwise mentioned or concerned in the latter part of this enactment, nor is it customary to give him any authority independent of the rest of the Seniors: it will also be observed that there is not any form of deprivation prescribed, or any apparent necessity for the intervention of that officer. It may perhaps be thought incredible

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

²³ Mr. Baker, of St. John's College, the celebrated antiquary, writes thus to his friend Hearne at Oxford:

May 26, 1734. "The execution of the sentence is by statute in the Vice-master. He that was in that post has resigned, and another chose entirely in the Master's interest, who will never proceed against him, unless compelled; and how that is to be done, is more than I know. In the meantime, *plectuntur Achivi*; which I am sorry for."

CHAP.
XIX.
1734

that a blunder of such magnitude should have been suffered to pass uncorrected. It is however no less certain than strange, that the fair copy of the statutes of Trinity College was not revised before it received the Royal sanction by the Great Seal : for there are actually found in all parts of them a great number of mistakes of the transcriber's pen, and those too of the grossest kind ; particularly in words which are likely to have been abbreviated in the original draught. In fact this error was afterwards found out, and the word *Visitorem* written over the other by a subsequent pen ; and at the beginning of the case, when a copy of the statute was submitted to the Privy Council, the prosecutors assumed the licence which their Master had taught them in his editions of classical authors, and made an attempt to introduce this various reading into the text.

Since, however, the *littera scripta*, confirmed by the Great Seal of England, made the Vice-master the agent of deprivation, it remained a question how to enforce the performance of this office. A long pause took place, which I apprehend to have been owing to the severe illness of Dr. Colbatch. In the month of November the opinion of Mr. Wynne, who had been counsel for the prosecution, was asked respecting the present posture of affairs and the proper mode of proceeding. That gentleman, after much consideration, declared his belief, that until the act of removal had been executed by the Vice-master, the place was not void, and the acts of Dr. Bentley as Master continued to be legal. He was convinced indeed that the Bishop of Ely was General Visitor by King Edward's statutes, and thought that he might enforce his mandate by punishing those who disobeyed it : but if his Lordship did not choose to

Nov. 2.

Dec. 5.

take that course, Mr. Wynne saw no other method but to send a fresh order to the new Vice-master, and in case of his non-compliance, to apply to the Court of King's Bench for a mandamus to oblige him to execute his duty ; though he confessed that he recollected no instance of that Court interfering in such a case. If this failed, the *dernier resort* was to be a petition to the House of Lords.

CHAP.
XIX.
1734.

In pursuance of this advice, Bishop Greene sent his mandate to Dr. Walker, requiring him immediately to deprive the Master, agreeably to his sentence. To this rescript no attention was paid. Colbatch, as senior Fellow, called upon the Vice-master to enquire whether he had executed, or intended to execute, his duty ; to which enquiry the latter declined to give any reply. The next step should have been an application to the Court of King's Bench ; but experience had given the prosecutors so great a horror of Westminster Hall, that, after some demur, they resolved to invert the course directed by counsel, and to pray at once for justice from the House of Peers. Accordingly, Dr. Colbatch, as the senior, petitioned their Lordships on behalf of himself and other members of Trinity College, that the Vice-master might be required to put in execution the sentence against Dr. Bentley. It was at first proposed to fix a day for the consideration of this petition ; but a motion was immediately made for its rejection. A debate ensued, which concluded with leave being given by the House that it should be withdrawn. Never having seen any account of this debate, I can only conjecture that the petition could not be received from its informality, as praying the House to interfere with the courts below, not in the way of appeal, but in an extra-judicial manner.

January,
1734-35.

Colbatch
petitions
the House
of Lords.
March 10.

The only remaining step was to re-enter the Court Compro-

CHAP.
XIX.
1735.

—
mise be-
tween Bent-
ley and part
of the pro-
secutors.

of King's Bench : but ere that could be done, a compromise had taken place between Bentley and some of his most active prosecutors. This measure, so important to the fortunes of our hero, was brought about by the agency of Dr. Walker, who possessed more conciliatory qualities than any of his former ministers. Though deeply engaged in all the Master's most obnoxious measures, we do not observe that he had ever brought personal enmity upon himself. By his mediation, Bentley on the one hand, and Johnson, Parne, &c. on the other, came to a pacific agreement; it was promised that the latter should not be obstructed in their fair claims to offices, and preferments, so long as they on their part abstained from giving any assistance of money or other co-operation to displace the Master. There was also a general understanding that he was no longer to interfere in the elections and government of the College : a forbearance which, so long as the administration remained in the hands of his devoted creature, was but of little moment. That the Fellows should have entered into such terms, can occasion no surprise : they had already exerted themselves for the space of seven years, with efforts beyond their means and station, to procure redress of grievances : and having after great and painful sacrifices obtained a trial of the questions at issue, and a sentence in their favour, they saw no method of procuring its execution. A fresh suit in Westminster Hall held out little prospect but delay and expense. They fancied that their enemy was shielded by some secret and mysterious influence ; since it had happened, that even when legal opinions concurred in their favour, the practical results were always against them. Meanwhile the injury and losses brought upon the College by the prosecution had been greater than those which

they had sought to remedy. Besides these motives for desisting from litigation, the ages of the Visitor, the Master, and the principal prosecutor, all of whom were septuagenarians, made it probable that time and the course of nature would end the controversy before the law had decided it. Personal interest had also its weight in bringing about this pacification: the prosecutors were not only excluded from office or preferment, but, as the Master held the absolute power without any practicable appeal, they stood themselves in more real danger of expulsion than he did. Johnson was next in succession to the Seniority: but there was small chance of his being admitted to that or any other object, so long as he continued promoter of the suit against the Master. Parne had to endure an additional grievance, in seeing his pupils excluded from scholarships and fellowships; while the other vexations to which he was exposed, as tutor, must have been almost insupportable. There was, I apprehend, another cause which induced him, although a man of undaunted spirit, to submit to the terms of compromise: he was ambitious of rank and office in the University; which he had little chance of obtaining, so long as he continued to be opposed by part of his own College. It happened at the end of 1734, that John Taylor, the distinguished scholar already mentioned, was removed from the office of Librarian to that of Registry of the University. Parne was then a candidate to succeed him as Librarian, and was elected by the Senate. From a statement of his own I discover, that about the same time the treaty just mentioned between him and the Master was concluded by the intervention of Walker: whence I infer that this office was a motive, and his success at the election a result of that agreement.

CHAP.
XIX.
1735.

Parne
elected
Librarian
to the Uni-
versity.

CHAP.
XIX.
1735.

Colbatch
renews the
suit.

June 25.
Court of
King's
Bench grant
a man-
damus ad-
dressed to
Dr. Walker.

Colbatch viewed the subject in a different light, and considered it a duty owing to the College to leave no legal and practicable method untried to procure the execution of the sentence. He accordingly appealed again to the laws for assistance. I cannot discover from his papers, that he had any confederate in the renewal of the suit, except his friend Smith, who was not disheartened like the rest, but resolved to contribute to what he considered the deliverance of the College, as long as his means lasted. In the Trinity term of 1735, a motion was made in the Court of King's Bench for a mandamus to compel the Vice-master to give effect to the Bishop of Ely's sentence, by immediately depriving Dr. Bentley: the Court granted a writ of mandamus, addressed to Dr. Walker, requiring him to execute the sentence, or to show cause for omitting to do so, upon a day appointed in the next Michaelmas term. This order, by securing the Master a respite from danger for the next five months, left him at liberty to pursue his edition of Homer, and allows us to revert to a few occurrences which took place in the course of this anxious suit.

Death of
Dr. Davies.
March 7,
1731-32.

At the beginning of 1732, Bentley's friend, Dr. Davies, had nearly completed the great object which had occupied him so many years, an edition of all the Philosophical Works of Cicero, having advanced as far as the middle of the third Book of Offices, when a termination was put to his labours and his life.

His papers were bequeathed to that general patron of scholars, Dr. Mead: he, wishing to have them published according to the editor's intentions, placed them in the hands of Dr. Thomas Bentley, who was to supply what Davies had left unfinished, and to publish an edition of the Offices uniform with the other pieces. But while he was employed upon this

work at lodgings in the Strand, an accident occurred, which put an end to his undertaking, and had nearly proved fatal to himself. He is stated to have indulged himself in the dangerous practice of reading in bed, and thereby to have set fire to the house; and the conflagration was so rapid, that he had barely time to escape with his own life. All his papers were destroyed, including the whole of Davies's manuscripts entrusted to his care, and some inedited *scholia* on Homer, which he was copying for the use of his uncle's edition²⁴. Not long after this catastrophe he

CHAP.
XIX.
1735.

Destruction
of his Notes
on Cicero's
Offices by
Fire.

²⁴ Dr. Mead in a letter prefixed to the third edition of Davies's *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, notices this circumstance: "Ego negotiis, ut nosti, distentus ipse et in re nostra medica occupatissimus, amico cuidam in scriptoribus classicis et arte critica satis exercitato, schedas Davisii omnes in manus tradideram; qui dum in iisdem digerendis atque supplendis totus esset, ecce in ædibus, ubi diversabatur, incendium, pestis in hac urbe heu! nimium frequens, erupit: atque adeo repentinum quidem atque violentum, ut homo ipse vix flammas evaserit; unde factum est, ut inter alia Davisii Notæ penitus interierint." J. Chr. Wolf mentions the same occurrence in a letter to La Croze, Oct. 2, 1733. "Cl. Dorvillius heri mihi nunciavit, Cl. Th. Bentleii Ædes, una cum Bibliotheca ejus, quam altera pars Inscriptionum Asiaticarum, in Homeri Iliadem *ἀνέκδοτα*, et Davisii in Ciceronis de Officiis Libros Annotationes ornarunt, ita periisse, ut ipse ægre vitam servavit." That the fire was owing to Thomas Bentley reading in bed, is related by the author of the account of Davies in the *Biographia Britannica*, who had information respecting him from some of his contemporaries. Mr. Kidd, in the preface to *Opuscula Ruhnkeniana*, p. lix. seems to attribute the fire not to Thomas, but to his uncle, (although he refers to the above letter of Wolf) and to imagine that the conflagration destroyed some of his criticisms, and particularly the greater part of his *Curæ Posteriores* on Cicero's Tusculans. His notions on this point are adopted by the writer of an article in the *Gent. Mag.* for 1807, p. 1048. (taken from the *Literary Panorama*) who attributes to our great Aristarchus the fatal habit of reading in bed. But whoever compares that statement with the authorities in this note, will perceive it is a misapprehension, caused by confounding the uncle with the nephew. I am convinced that the story of Bentley's Notes on the Tusculans being burned, is also a mistake; nor do I believe that he had prepared any more for his second series, than those found in the two books, the contents of which form the Appendix to the edition of the Tusculans printed at the Clarendon press. This matter has been explained in p. 116.

CHAP. found it expedient to part with the property at
 XIX. Oulton, which had descended to him from his father,
 1735. James Bentley, including the house in which our
 Aristarchus was born.

1731.
 Contest for
 the Vice-
 chancellor's
 office.

The stratagem by which the Tory party in the University had elected Dr. Lambert to the Vice-chancellorship in 1729, was remembered and represented by their opponents. Dr. Mawson was chosen in 1730, and by way of retaliation his friends procured his re-appointment for the following year. The spirit of party long continued active in the academical community; and the election to the chief-magistracy, an office which in tranquil times is rather considered a burthen, continued to be the occasion of warm competition. After another year, Dr. Long, Master of Pembroke, and Dr. Towers, Master of Christ's, being nominated, a contest took place in which, judging from the list of voters, the feelings of the two parties seem to have been entirely political: the Tories succeeded in electing Long by a majority of 102 against 72. The next year they planned to choose him to a second term of office, and to exclude Towers, who had, it may be recollected, given great offence as Proctor by his conduct at the time of Bentley's degradation. At the nomination three names were proposed, Towers, Long, and Adams, and it happened that an equal number of Heads voted for each: whereupon the case being referred to the decision of Dr. Bentley, as Regius Professor of Divinity, he determined in favour of Towers and Adams; and in consequence the former was chosen by the Senate on the following day. After Towers had filled the chair, the election of chief-magistrate, which had almost always been contested since Bentley's nomination in 1716, relapsed into its former routine, and

Nov. 4,
 1733.

Nov. 3,
 1734.

remained undisturbed for nearly fifty years : at least, if any contest did occur during that period, it has not obtained a record either in writing or tradition ²⁵.

CHAP.
XIX.
1735.

²⁵ There was a contest in 1782, when the late Bishop Beadon, being Master of Jesus College, was elected ; and another in 1809, when Dr. Milner, late Dean of Carlisle, and President of Queen's, was successful. In both cases, the usual order was set aside.

CHAPTER XX.

Bentley's proposed edition of Homer—Account of the Digamma—Bentley's discovery of its use by Homer—Great difficulty of the undertaking—Pronunciation of the Digamma—Account of Richard Dawes—His book—His treatment of Bentley—Heyne's Homer—Pope's hostility to Bentley—Arbuthnot ridicules Bentley's critical style in Scriblerus—Attacks him severely in an imitation of Gulliver—Pope's Dunciad—Mallet's poem on Verbal Criticism—Pope's direct attacks upon Bentley—Walker's return to the mandamus of the King's Bench—Mandamus addressed to the Bishop of Ely—Quashed by the Court—A third mandamus procured to enforce the execution of the sentence—Parne rejoins the prosecutors—Chief Justice Lee—Court discharges the rule—Death of Bishop Greene—Termination of the efforts to procure Bentley's expulsion—College distressed by the expenses of the suit—Bentley brings an action against Colbatch as Archdeacon of Ely—Ecclesiastical Procurations—Decision in Bentley's favour—Colbatch's pamphlet—Discovery of a sect of Atheists—Strutt—Whitehead—Ducket—Public trial—Court adjourned to Bentley's Lodge—Ducket's expulsion—Society for the encouragement of learning—Publication of Bentley's Manilius—Bentley has a paralytic stroke—Is disabled from publishing Homer—Death of Mrs. Bentley—Bentley's intimates in old age—His domestic habits—Cumberland's account of them—Pope's fresh offence against Bentley—Fourth book of the Dunciad—Miller the botanist—Thomas Bentley's publications and death—Warburton's conduct in respect to Bentley—Singular proof of Bentley's sagacity in correcting a Greek inscription—Bentley's last illness—His death—Funeral—Disposition of his property—His library and papers—His family—Remarks on the personal character of Dr. Bentley—His literary merits—Trinity College.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

Bentley's
proposed
edition of
Homer.

WE must now speak of a matter which will ever constitute an interesting feature in the literary career of Dr. Bentley—his projected edition of Homer. The principal object which he proposed to himself was to reform the versification of the poet, the harmony of whose lines is continually impaired by open vowels, and other metrical defects. The reformation was to

be effected by the aid of manuscripts, quotations, and scholiasts, but above all, by the introduction of the *Æolic Digamma*. The history of this celebrated letter, and its disappearance from the Greek alphabet, have been the subject of so much dispute among later scholars, that its very mention suggests a series of curious questions ; which however this is not the place to discuss. It is now, I believe, admitted on all hands, that the consonant must have been used by Homer, that its restoration is necessary for the prosody of many of his verses, and that for the first discovery of this fact we are indebted to Dr. Bentley. The digamma itself he had seen mentioned in various ancient authors and grammarians ; it had been recently found in some ancient inscriptions, bearing a form similar to that produced by the perpendicular union of two gammas, from which it drew its name ; and its former existence in the *Æolic* was proved by its being retained in the renowned descendant of that dialect, the Latin language ; the words *ver*, *vicus*, *vinum*, *video*, &c. exhibiting a consonant which their Grecian kindred had discarded. The epithet '*Æolic*' seems to have been one cause which had prevented a suspicion of this letter's original existence in the poems of Homer, who was generally considered an Ionian. The following appears to be the outline of its real history : the digamma was one of sixteen original letters of the Greek alphabet ; but partly owing to the adoption of other consonants, and partly from dislike of its harsh sound, it fell gradually into disuse : it was abandoned first by the Ionic Greeks, before the period when writing was general ; it was next dropped by the Dorian tribe ; but was continued much later by the *Æolians* settled in Lesbos and other islands, as well as by those who retained their old station in the Peloponnesus ; and its being there found, after it had

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

Account of
the Di-
gamma.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

been exiled from the rest of Greece, seems the only reason for its possessing the distinctive title of *Æolic*. It is a fact well established by history, that the copies of Homer's poems, which have ever since delighted the world, were written at Athens, the metropolis of the Ionic family. At this period (the age of Pisis-tratus) the Athenians themselves were contracting and refining their language into that chastised and elegant dialect, which is the principal depository of the literature of Greece. Without entering into the hopeless question of the country, or native dialect of Homer, we may observe that it was natural for the Athenians, when they wrote down his poems, to give them the dress of Ionic, the old poetical language of their own country; so that the digamma, which had been long banished from Attic soil, had no chance of finding a place in the copies which have descended to posterity. Hence it was left for the illustrious critic of the eighteenth century to reinstate this long-lost exile.

Bentley's
discovery of
its use by
Homer.

The discovery itself, and the process by which it was confirmed, mark the genius of Bentley and the logical turn of his mind. He first observed that the offensive hiatus in verses of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* continually recurred in the same words; and some of them, he was led to believe, from the slender accounts which we possess of the old *Æolic* dialect, had once been written with the digamma. By trying the experiment of inserting the consonant in all those words wherever they occurred in Homer, he found that in a great majority of instances he succeeded in improving the versification. On proceeding to make the same insertion in other words, where the metre required support, his success was too general to proceed from accident, and established to demonstration the truth of the discovery. At the same time this restoration

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

of the true orthography of so many words enabled him to correct numerous faulty verses with perfect success and certainty. It must not be forgotten that Bentley made this discovery at a time when there was much less information respecting the old orthography of Greece than what we now possess. Subsequent to that time the publication of some ancient grammatical works, of which he knew nothing, has taught us that the digamma was actually used in the very words to which Bentley affixed it: and a similar confirmation of his doctrine is derived from old inscriptions upon stones dug out of ruins in those parts of Greece where this consonant held its ground the longest¹.

At what time Bentley's discovery was first made I cannot determine: but from a small hint in some notes written in the margin of a copy of Collins' Freethinking, preparatory to his Remarks upon that work, I find that he had made up his mind about the use of it in Homer, as far back as the year 1713, although it is probable that he was not at that time prepared to announce it to the world. It appears that about 1726 he meditated giving an edition of Homer, but not till after the publication of his New Testament. About three years later his friend, Dr. Clarke, published the first volume of his edition of the Iliad, but died before he had completed his notes on the second. While he was engaged in this undertaking, Bentley communicated to him, in conversation, his notions respecting the digamma, with some of his reasons; and in one of the last notes which Clarke lived to write, he mentioned Bentley's mode of restoring the measure by the digamma: this was in the

¹ An inscription found by Sir William Gell in the territory of Elis, which contains the digamma seven times in the space of ten lines, is printed from a fac-simile in the *Museum Criticum*, vol. i. p. 536. Among other digammatized words it presents *αἰρε* *Ἑῖρος*, *αἰρε* *Ἑάργον*.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

sixteenth Book ; and it was published by his son, who finished the second volume, in 1732. About the same time two quotations from Homer, in Bentley's notes upon Milton, presented to the eye the long-lost consonant in its full dimensions². It was natural that all lovers of Homer should be interested by this discovery, and feel anxious to see in detail the opinions of the greatest of metrical scholars upon Homeric versification. Almost immediately after these publications, Lord Carteret engaged him to pledge himself for a new edition of Homer : and to that work he devoted all the leisure allowed him by the more imperious business of preserving his station and preferment. It would, under any circumstances, have been a bold enterprize for a person whose years exceeded threescore and ten to commence an edition of the Iliad and Odyssey ; but the Doctor rendered his task immoderately severe, by undertaking to introduce the digamma in every word of the text to which it once belonged, and likewise to give every line its faultless measure. To reconcile these two objects formed the first difficulty : for though in a majority of cases, the digamma proved the means of sustaining the metre, yet it happened in not a few that this addition made it impossible to scan the verse, and reduced the critic to the alternative of either changing some words, or pronouncing the whole a spurious interpolation. Whoever reflects upon the history of these poems, and recollects that they underwent the revision and alteration of the Alexandrian grammarians, who had no suspicion of the exiled consonant which once belonged

² Bentley's printer, having no better method of representing the Digamma than by a roman capital F, (ὃ δ', ἐρεμνῇ νυκτὶ Φεουκῶς—Δεινὸν πανταίῳ) gave occasion to Pope's allusion to its towering size :

" While towering o'er your alphabet, like Saul,
Stands our Digamma, and o'ertops them all."

to them, will see that the complete success of such a plan was hopeless. What he did achieve was, in his circumstances, more than could have been anticipated. He corrected and noted the two poems from beginning to end; availing himself of the collations of all the manuscripts then to be procured, and amending the text, wherever he could, from the lexicons and grammarians. Many of the verses which were unmanageable, he rejected; though the number condemned does not come near to that which a late editor, who pursued a similar plan, found it expedient to discard. The frequent changes and erasures of his own corrections, which appear in his copy, prove the uncertainty and difficulty of the undertaking: independently of the lines affected by the digamma, many others presented obstacles to the restitution of metrical propriety; and the character of Bentley's criticism, which had become more daring as his years increased, sometimes led him to harsh attempts at alteration.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

I consider it a matter of regret that our critic, instead of devoting his latter years to an attempt at a complete edition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, did not give the public an essay upon Homeric versification: such a performance, which would not have occupied more than one of his long vacations, might have comprised the whole doctrine and application of the digamma, as well as most other points interesting to scholars, which could have been expected from the larger work. Even a *schediasma*, similar to that upon the metres of Terence, would have been highly acceptable; and the sketch of such a piece was actually in readiness: whereas the meditated edition, had his prosecutors left him at liberty to print it, must, from the very nature of the plan, have contained much that would have proved unsatisfactory, and have compromised the high reputation of the editor, which, as

Great difficulty of the undertaking.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

a Greek critic, stood unimpeached and unrivalled. To say the truth, there is great room for doubts as to the propriety of printing Homer's text with the insertion of the digamma, while the rest of the orthography remains as in the common copies. To maintain any thing like consistency, several other changes are requisite, to bring back the Iliad and Odyssey to their earlier dress. This feat has been attempted in our own times by Mr. Payne Knight, a gentleman whose attention was for many years devoted almost exclusively to the infant literature of Greece. Both his learning and ingenuity deserve high commendation ; but I cannot consider his representation of the Homeric text successful. Although he restores the ancient orthography in several other respects besides the digamma, yet by using some characters of later introduction, he forfeits his claim to consistency : the appearance of the lines is disagreeable to the eye, and the reader is likewise offended at missing a considerable portion of the verses hitherto composing part of the poems : after all, the antiquarian, for whom the publication seems principally designed, finds the orthography consistent with that of no period whatever ; and even the semblance of antiquity is destroyed by the adoption of the common cursive character, instead of the uncial letters of the earlier ages.

Pronunciation of the Digamma.

During the time that Bentley was occupied upon Homer, he used to amuse his friends, and all who sought his conversation, by expounding his doctrine of the digamma, and reciting verses of the poet as he conceived they ought to be read. Among other topics respecting this mysterious consonant, its original pronunciation has been the subject of many sharp arguments ; some maintaining that it corresponded in sound with our F, others with V, and others with W. In truth, the authorities which we

possess upon this doubtful question would rather lead us to believe, that its sound varied in different parts of the Grecian territory. But without entering upon that question, I shall only remark, that Bentley always pronounced his new-found letter as W: and I dare say that some will attribute his partiality for that guttural consonant to his being himself a native of the north-country³.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

The foregoing account of Bentley's Homer must have reminded scholars of the section upon the digamma given by Richard Dawes, in his *Miscellanea Critica*, as well as his perpetual endeavours to carp at and depreciate the great critic, to whose writings he was himself singularly indebted. His violent dislike for the Doctor, and the injustice with which he treats him in all parts of his volume, are observed with surprise by every reader. One of his editors attempts to account for the phenomenon, by supposing Dawes to have resided at Cambridge during the heat of the disputes between Bentley and the University, and to have taken part against him⁴: but

³ Mr. Thomas Blackwell, the Professor of Greek at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, visited Cambridge at this time (1735) and was introduced to Bentley: having the good fortune to hear him speak upon this favourite topic, he gave the following account of his visit in a letter: "He received us very graciously, and entertained us with the service he had done to learning by restoring the Æolic Digamma, which he pronounced like our W. He acknowledged that Dionysius of Halicarnassus explained the Digamma by a φ in Greek, and a V in Latin; 'but,' says the old gentleman, 'he and Aristarchus and Demetrius were all dunces, and knew nothing of the Digamma; which I have restored the use of, after it had been lost 2000 years.'" This was just after Blackwell had published his *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*; of which book it is said, but I know not on what authority, that Bentley observed, 'when he had gone through half of it, he had forgotten the beginning; and when he had finished the reading of it, he had forgotten the whole.' *Kippis' Biogr. Brit.* vol. ii. p. 337.

⁴ "Dawesius videtur Cantabrigiæ commoratus esse, cum partium studia contra Bentleium maxime arderent; et ipse etiam ex iis fuisse partibus. Huc enim referre soleo, quod in *Miscellaneis Criticis* occasio-

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

this notion is inconsistent with time, as his first admission in Emanuel College was in the year 1725, when those feuds had subsided. It is not improbable that he was acquainted with some of the Fellows of Trinity who were prosecuting Bentley, and entered into their feelings⁵: and it may be presumed that his political opinions were of a severe character, since he takes occasion, from the emendation of a passage in Aristophanes, to express his detestation of Sir Robert Walpole, in a sentence more remarkable for its ill-nature than its humour⁶. Again, he was nominated by the Heads as a candidate for the office of Esquire-beadle in 1734, but was beaten by his competitor, Burrowes, of Trinity: he might indeed attribute this defeat to Bentley's influence; but that the Head of a College should exert himself on such an occasion in favour of one of his Fellows, was so natural, that it could hardly have provoked resentment. We must, therefore, look for some other cause. Dawes, who delighted in Greek poetry, had translated the first book of Milton's *Paradise Lost* into Homeric verse, and designing to publish it by subscription, printed a short specimen, with two or three Latin notes; in one of which he joined the general voice in condemning Bentley's edition of Milton, both with regard to its principle and execution. It can hardly be doubted that this specimen was shown to our Aristarchus, who was regarded at Cambridge as the Grecian oracle: in that case, we may be certain that he expressed his opinion pretty

nem qualemcumque arripiat de laudibus Benteianis detrahendi, &c."—*Burgess. Pref. ad Dawes. Misc. Crit. p. iv.*

⁵ Dawes seems to have been acquainted with Mason: at least it was by the latter, in conjunction with Mr. Henry Hubbard of Emanuel College, that the volume of *Miscellanea Critica* was carried through the University press.

⁶ *Miscellanea Critica*, p. 77. ed. *Cantab.*

roundly of the faults and inaccuracies of the version, which are in fact more numerous than the lines ; and the severity of his criticism was likely to be increased by the proposer's flippant and offensive note about his Milton. Dawes, instead of publishing any more of his translation, immediately set himself to acquire that knowledge of the niceties of the Greek language, in which his specimen had proved him to be deficient. He studied all Bentley's writings with the minutest attention, and while thereby forming his notions of true criticism, he was incessantly on the watch to detect flaws and imperfections in his master. In perusing Greek writers, but particularly the Attic poets, he closely inspected their peculiarities of construction, metre, and grammar. Being endowed with uncommon penetration and discernment, he hit upon the true method of discovering the laws which they adopted, and by means of comparison and analogy, was able to draw up those rules, which threw a new light upon the language, and have contributed in a wonderful degree to ascertain the genuine texts of the ancient writers. The sagacity as well as industry of this man is proved by the history of his book. At the time of printing his specimen in 1736, he had shown himself ignorant of the very rudiments of that science by which his name has since been distinguished ; and in 1744 he sent to the press his volume of *Miscellanea Critica*. In the course of those eight years, six of which he was employed in teaching the grammar-school at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the foundations of his system were laid, and the whole fabric was completed. Though he lived more than twenty years after that time, the remainder of his life appears to have been neither useful to the world nor honourable to himself.

This writer's spirit of injustice and detraction,

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

His treat-
ment of
Bentley.

whenever he mentions Bentley, is the most marked feature of his book : it shows itself in the preface, where he decries the unrivalled performance on Phalaris, and confines its author's merit to that of a detector of sophists : he cannot propound his notions upon the metre and division of tragic and comic verses, which were entirely learned from the Doctor's writings, without cavilling at his master. We learn from a letter of Dawes to Taylor, that two sections of his book, which are suppressed, consisted of strictures upon Bentley's notes on Aristophanes, and emendations of Menander : he charges him with possessing hardly any knowledge of Greek but what he had derived from indexes and lexicons ; an assertion so extravagantly false, as to consign either to ridicule or disgrace the person who could utter it. His knowledge of the digamma had been collected from what Bentley had suffered to transpire of his intended edition of Homer : but while explaining that doctrine with great diligence and accuracy, he labours to rob its discoverer of all credit, and instead of praise, gives him much censure for introducing into Ionic poetry a consonant which he fancies peculiar to Æolic ; whereas, he thinks the letter which is to be restored to Homer ought to be called *Vau*. From a consideration of all circumstances, I am convinced that Dawes's ill-usage of Bentley arose, not so much from personal or party hatred directed against a man who had been dead two or three years before the *Miscellanea Critica* appeared, as from a design to appropriate to himself the praise due to the illustrious critic ; and that he hoped to veil this disingenuous scheme by testifying dislike and contempt for his master. Such conduct undoubtedly implies, an illiberal and unprincipled spirit ; and I am sorry to say, that all which has been recorded of his character rather tends to confirm

than remove this suspicion. While at Cambridge he was addicted to low company and vulgar habits; and of his subsequent life we learn little, except that he was engaged in constant quarrels with his neighbours, and abuse of his best friends and benefactors.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

It is a satisfaction to observe that Dawes's attack upon Bentley's literary claims has entirely failed, while he has himself reaped from it abundant discredit. All subsequent scholars, without exception, have assigned the merit of the restoration of the digamma in Homer to its real author. When the learned and candid Heyne was engaged upon his edition of the Iliad, the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, to whom Bentley's corrected copy of Homer had been recently bequeathed, determined, with much spirit and liberality, to send it to Gottingen for his use. One cannot help admiring Heyne's account of the transport with which he beheld the hand of the venerable scholar, and his gratitude for the signal instance of generosity which allowed him this benefit. But it is most interesting to observe, what a contrast his behaviour towards Bentley forms to that of Dawes. He not only faithfully communicates the manuscript contents of the book, but ingenuously confesses that all his own acquaintance with Homeric prosody was derived from this source, which he regards as the greatest assistance and ornament of his publication⁷.

Heyne's
Homer.

⁷ Heyne in his preface, p. xv. says of this loan, "*Hujus munificentiae, generosis Britannorum animis dignissimae, memoria praedicabitur, quamdiu Homericum studium erit aliquis honos; debet ei opera mea ornamenta sua, si qua in ea eminent, principe loco.*" His gratitude, however, is lavished more upon the persons, who were merely the vehicles of his request, than upon the Seniority of Trinity College, to whose spirit and generosity he was exclusively indebted for the accommodation which he so greatly valued. A full account of Bentley's book (Stephens's edition) and the doctrine of the Digamma, is contained in the preface to tom. iii. p. xciii.—xvi. and the Excursus on the 19th Book of the Iliad. vol. vii. p. 708.

CHAP.

XX.

1735.

 Pope's hos-
 tility to
 Bentley.

Our readers may perhaps be surprised at not having yet met with any notice of the well-known hostility displayed against our critic by Mr. Pope, the greatest poetical genius among his contemporaries; particularly as it is customary to attribute the alienation of the public mind, and the abandonment of his projected edition of Homer, to the keen and witty attacks of the satirist. The fact is, that it was not till Bentley had reached old age, and was no longer to be dreaded as an adversary, that those attacks commenced; and the consequences assigned to them are altogether imaginary. Dr. Johnson, who lived with the contemporaries of both, observes in his *Lives of the Poets*, that ‘of Pope’s vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, he had never heard any adequate reason.’ It would be indeed a hard matter to discover ‘adequate reasons’ for the various resentments of the bard of Twickenham, which so often originated in jealousy, spleen, the suspicion of a slight, or some casual offence. But for his dislike of Bentley, there may surely be found reasons more than sufficient to operate upon so irritable a temperament. The common story of his having told Pope, whom he met at Bishop Atterbury’s table shortly after the publication of his translation of the *Iliad*, ‘that it was a very pretty poem, but that he must not call it Homer,’ is told in different forms; and its truth is very probable, from his having himself, when asked in his latter days, what had been the cause of Pope’s dislike, replied, “I talked against his Homer; and the portentous cub never forgives.” The opinion attributed to Bentley, respecting the English *Iliad*, is, in fact, no more than its greatest admirers have always admitted; amidst all its beauties, we cannot recognize a resemblance to the original. But the declaration of such a sentiment from the first Greek scholar of the age was

certain to give uneasiness to the poet, particularly as he knew that his slender acquaintance with the original language was his most vulnerable point. But had there existed no such offence, yet there were numberless reasons which would make Pope regard Bentley with unfriendly eyes. He had early fallen under the lash of Swift, the leader and idol of his party; he was the successful antagonist of Atterbury, another of the poet's friends; and had given great offence to Bolingbroke, a third. His ministerial politics, and admittance to the select parties of Queen Caroline, added to his demerits: he was regarded as an object of extreme aversion in the family of Lord Oxford, where Pope was a frequent visitor: but above all, he stood at the head of the verbal critics of the age, a race against whom Pope had denounced implacable war, ever since his own failure in the character of critical editor of Shakspeare. But however inclined he might be to make our Aristarchus the object of his taunts, it was not till many years after the translation of the Iliad that he thought fit to commence his attack; nor even then, until the war had been begun by a confederate.

The friendship which subsisted between Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, Parnell, and Gay, was such, that whoever offended any one was sure to be placed under the ban of the whole alliance. Dr. Arbuthnot possessed, in a high degree, that classical knowledge in which Swift and Pope were deficient. In the publication of these friends, entitled 'Miscellanies,' which appeared in 1727, Arbuthnot, who wrote most of the lucubrations of Martinus Scriblerus, sometimes endeavoured to ape Bentley's style; and the section called *Virgilius Reformatus* contains a direct burlesque of his emendatory criticism, under the garb of Scriblerus' pretended alterations of the two first books of

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

Arbuthnot
ridicules
Bentley's
critical style
in Scrib-
lerus.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

Attacks him
severely in
an imitation
of Gulliver.

the *Æneid*; the short and imperious decrees of this critical *jeu-d'esprit* being particularly designed to ridicule the Notes on Phædrus, which were lately published. These came forth about the same time as the celebrated Travels of Gulliver, the plan of which is known to have been discussed by Swift with his friends at Twickenham. It is probable that they had wished him to introduce Dr. Bentley among the prominent characters in his Empire of Lilliput. But whether it was from a sense of the injustice done to him in his first publications, the 'Tale of a Tub,' and 'Battle of the Books,' or from some other cause, it may be remarked that Swift never chose to indulge in a sneer at our critic in any of his subsequent writings. To supply this deficiency, Arbuthnot printed a little episode to his friend's book, called 'An Account of the State of Learning in the Empire of Lilliput, together with the History and Character of *Bullum*, the Emperor's Library-Keeper.' This piece of satire succeeded in catching the manner, and preserving the allusions and tone of Gulliver; and in the guise of that extraordinary traveller, he delivered as keen and unsparing a satire upon the manners and principles of Bentley, as any of the countless adversaries by whom we have found his character assailed⁸.

⁸ As this piece of Dr. Arbuthnot's is not commonly met with, a few extracts will not be unacceptable to the reader.

"Bullum is a tall raw-boned man, I believe near six inches and a half high; from his infancy he applied himself, with great industry, to the old Blefusudian language, in which he made such a progress, that he almost forgot his native Lilliputian: and at this time he can neither write nor speak two sentences, without a mixture of old Blefusudian. These qualifications, joined to an undaunted forward spirit, and a few good friends, prevailed with the Emperor's grandfather to make him keeper of his library, and a Mulro in the Gomflastru; though most men thought him fitter to be one of the Royal Guards. These places soon helped him to riches, and upon the strength of them he soon began to despise every body, and to be despised by every body. This engaged him in many

Shortly afterwards Pope's *Dunciad* made its appearance, in the earlier editions of which were the following lines :

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

Pope's *Dunciad*.

" *Bentley* his mouth with classic flatt'ry opes,
And the puff'd orator bursts out in tropes ;
But *Welsted* most the poet's healing balm
Strives to extract, from his soft yielding palm :
Unlucky *Welsted* ! thy unfeeling master,
The more thou ticklest, gripes his fist the faster."

B. II. 179.

quarrels, which he managed in a very odd manner ; whenever he thought himself affronted, he immediately flung a great book at his adversary, and if he could, felled him to the earth ; but if his adversary stood his ground and flung another book at him, which was sometimes done with great violence, then he complained to the Grand Justiciary, that these affronts were designed to the Emperor, and that he was singled out only as being the Emperor's servant. By this trick he got that great officer to favour him, which made his enemies cautious, and him insolent.

" Bullum attended the Court some years, but could not get into an higher post ; for though he constantly wore the heels of his shoes high or low, as the fashion was, yet having a long back and a stiff neck, he never could with any dexterity creep under the stick, which the Emperor or the chief minister held. As to his dancing on a rope, I shall speak of it presently ; but the greatest skill at that art will not procure a man a place at court, without some agility at the stick." *State of Learning in the Empire of Lilliput*.

Bentley's quarrel with the University is thus typified :

" Some years after, the present Emperor, in a progress through his dominions, came to the Gomflastru ; and Bullum, without being asked, was resolved to divert his Majesty with his performance on the strait-rope : up he mounts, and capers bravely for some time ; at last, endeavouring to shew the utmost of his skill, in the midst of an high caper, he reached out his right hand too far, which gave him a terrible fall.

" Most people imputed it to his over-reaching himself ; but he laid the fault partly upon the robes he was obliged to wear before the Emperor, which, as he said, entangled his feet ; and partly upon the maliciousness of a by-stander, whom he accused of pulling the rope aside, as he was in the midst of his caper. However that was, poor Bullum broke his leg, and was carried to his own house, where he continued lame above two years, not being able to shew himself in public all that time ; and it was thought he would never have recovered, if the Emperor at last had not taken pity on him, and sent one of his own surgeons to him, who cured him immediately." *Ibid*.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

But either the poet found his taste questioned, for thus associating the first scholar of the age with a herd of alleged dunces, or some circumstance occurred to induce him to sound a retreat. In the edition of 1729, the first which was published with notes, all mention of Bentley is suppressed: but as the couplet in which he had been celebrated, though palpably altered from *Hudibras*, was thought too valuable to be sacrificed, Pope substituted for the name of Bentley that of Welsted; and transferred the four next lines, with a slight alteration, from Welsted to Oldmixon, another of the Whig writers, who had fallen under his displeasure.

After this retractation, I am not aware of any hostilities from Twickenham, till the disastrous edition of *Milton* had exposed our veteran critic to the censure and derision of all readers of English poetry. His genius was now pronounced to be in its dotage, and he was no longer an object of literary terror. Pope however still preferred to see him denounced by other pens rather than his own. David Malloch, of the proscribed clan of Rob Roy Macgregor, being then a literary adventurer about town, attached himself to the party and interests of the great satirist. The Celtic termination of Malloch being reduced into that of Mallet, this gentleman published a 'Poem on Verbal Criticism, addressed to Mr. Pope,' eulogizing the illustrious poet in terms of flattery, of which, notwithstanding his frequent professions to the contrary, he was unquestionably greedy, and abusing verbal critics, but particularly the two great objects of his dislike, Bentley and Theobald, in a mode precisely similar to that adopted elsewhere by Pope himself. This performance seems unequal; some of the lines are extremely good, and exactly convey the feelings of the superior bard: which circumstance, joined

Mallet's
poem on
Verbal Criticism.

with Pope's anticipation of Bentley's resentment against himself, convince me, that in the most pungent parts of the attack he had lent the assistance of his pen^o. Mallet was rewarded by the place of under-secretary to Frederick, Prince of Wales, procured him by Pope's interest : although a man of considerable genius, he seems to have been as unscrupulous and indiscriminate in his attacks upon the characters of others, as his kinsmen, the Highland freebooters, were upon their neighbours' lives and properties. It is well known, that after the death of Pope, he was employed by Lord Bolinbroke to expose the moral character of his deceased patron.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

About a year afterwards Pope declared public war against Bentley on his own account : in the ' Epistle

Pope's direct attacks upon Bentley.

^o Pope says in a letter to Richardson, in the latter part of 1732, " I am glad you published your Milton. Bentley will be angry at you, and at me shortly for what I could not help, a satirical poem on Verbal Criticism by Mr. Mallet, which he has inscribed to me : but the poem itself is good ; *another cause of anger to any critic.*"

The following is a specimen of this satire :

" While Bentley, long to wrangling schools confin'd,
And but by books acquainted with mankind,
Dares in the fulness of the pedant's pride
Rhyme, tho' no genius ; tho' no judge, decide ;
Yet he, prime pattern of the captious art,
Out tibbalding poor Tibbald, tops his part ;
Holds high the scourge o'er each fam'd author's head,
Nor are their graves a refuge for the dead :
To Milton lending sense, to Horace wit,
He makes them write what never poet writ ;
The Roman Muse arraigns his mangling pen,
And Paradise by him is lost again.
Such was his doom impos'd by Heav'n's decree,
With ears that hear not, eyes that shall not see,
The low to swell, to level the sublime,
To blast all beauty, and beprose all rhyme.
Great eldest-born of Dulness ! blind and bold,
Tyrant ! more cruel than Procrustes old,
Who to his iron bed by torture fits
Their nobler part, the souls of suff'ring wits."

V. 133.

CHAP. to Dr. Arbuthnot,' one of the most nervous and
 XX. finished of his compositions, appeared the following
 1735. lines :

" Did some more sober critic come abroad ?
 If wrong, I smil'd ; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
 Pains, reading, study are their just pretence,
 And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
 Commas and points they set exactly right,
 And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
 Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
 From *daring* Bentley down to piddling Tibbalds." V. 157.

In 1735 Pope printed a new edition of his poems, in folio, when he reinstated Bentley into his former place in the Dunciad, bearing, however, only his initial B——, and restored to Welsted the lines in which he was originally celebrated. Two years afterwards, in his imitation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus, he returned to the attack :

" Milton's strong pinion now not Heav'n can bound ;
 Now, serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground :
 In quibbles Angel and Archangel join,
 And God the Father turns a school divine.
 Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
 Like *slashing* Bentley with his desp'rate hook."

The epithet which he now fastened upon the critic pleased his fancy so strongly, that in a revision of the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, he substituted the same in place of the less distinguishing term '*daring* Bentley.' These details of the cautious progress of Pope's satire against the Doctor, will have reminded the reader of the elaborate passage devoted to him in the fourth book of the Dunciad ; as well as the ridicule which Warburton assists in heaping upon him, in his office of commentator on the poet. But this would anticipate several years of our history ; and it will be found,

that the period to which those satirical attacks were deferred, really forms one of the most curious and remarkable circumstances in the transaction.

CHAP.
XX.
1735.

We left Dr. Bentley still struggling in the midst of 'troubled waters,' with the same unbroken spirit with which he had for so many years maintained the conflict. In the Michaelmas term 1735, Dr. Walker, his faithful Achates, made a return in the Court of King's Bench to the writ of mandamus, which ordered him to execute the Bishop of Ely's sentence, by depriving the Master. He alleged the same topics so often advanced by Bentley, respecting the visitatorial power over Trinity College; that Queen Elizabeth's statutes, having superseded those of King Edward, the provision of the latter, whereby the Bishop was constituted General Visitor of the College, had been cancelled. He used no argument to justify his own disobedience, except that, as Vice-master, he owed no allegiance to the Bishop of Ely, but was amenable for what he did, or neglected to do, to no power or authority except the King himself, whom, as representative of the Founder, he considered General Visitor of the College; and concluded with submitting to the Court, whether he was compellable to give any other answer to their writ. Lord Hardwicke, who now presided on the Bench, had formerly, while Attorney-general, given his decided opinion, that the Bishop of Ely was General Visitor; and his three learned brethren had severally declared themselves to be of the same mind a few years before. But the difficulties which seemed always to arise whenever the affairs of Trinity College came before this high tribunal, were as great and intricate as ever. First, the Judges declined interposing their authority in compelling Walker to do his duty, upon the ground of its being contrary to practice, and inconsistent with their dignity, to aid an

Walker's
return to the
mandamus
of the King's
Bench.

CHAP.
XX.
1736.

A manda-
mus ad-
dressed to
the Bishop.

Jan. 27,
1736-37.

inferior court in enforcing its jurisdiction. Thereupon the form of the process was altered, and a writ was obtained for a mandamus to the Bishop to compel Dr. Walker to execute his sentence. It was now believed that the right method was at last discovered, that this mandamus must be confirmed, and that the extraordinary personage who had so long baffled and eluded his pursuers was fairly hunted down, and must submit to his fate. The Bishop was passive, and awaited the decision of the Court. Had he been backed by their authority, he would either have compelled the Vice-master's obedience, or have suspended him on his refusal: in the latter case, Dr. Colbatch, as the oldest Fellow, would have become his statutable substitute, and have immediately and joyfully executed the sentence of deprivation. The various steps of this action occupied the year 1736: in the course of the proceedings, Bentley obtained leave for his College to be admitted, in its corporate character, as a party in the action, and to show cause against the rule. In January following the case was matured for a hearing: Mr. Strange, a barrister rising into high reputation, who shortly became Solicitor-General, argued against the mandamus upon the ground of there being no precedents for such a measure, and of its being virtually an attempt to force the Court to do that which they had already refused, it being below their dignity to assist the proceedings of an inferior jurisdiction. The Bishop's counsel merely alleged, that he had carried the special authority with which the House of Lords had armed him as far as he thought himself empowered, but was ready to obey the directions of the Court. Serjeants Eyre and Wynne argued for the prosecutors, and showed the hardship and injustice which must ensue, unless the Court interposed; for that Doctor Bentley had received a trial before the

CHAP.
XX.
1737.

Bishop, upon a jurisdiction confirmed and sanctioned by the first court in the kingdom, had been convicted of the misdemeanors with which he stood charged, and sentenced to lose his office ; but kept possession of the place in defiance of all law : unless therefore the Court of King's Bench interfered, there would be a failure of justice, without a remedy from any quarter. They alleged precedents of *mandamus* being sent to visitors obliging them to discharge their functions ; but here, as well as in all other stages of the proceedings against Dr. Bentley, no cases could be discovered which perfectly tallied and agreed with his extraordinary predicament. The Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Page appeared to lay great stress upon the precedent of a *mandamus* having been sent to Bishop Moore, calling upon him to take cognizance of the first accusation preferred by his Fellows against Dr. Bentley : but they all felt great difficulty in making up their minds upon the present question, and after much conversation, took refuge in another postponement, for the purpose of having the Crown-Office searched for precedents to assist them as guides. On a subsequent day Lord Hardwicke and Judge Lee declared a view of the case differing from that expressed by any of the counsel : they held that the writ was *felo de se* ; since its object was to procure the Court's assistance in enforcing the Bishop's jurisdiction, at the same time that it considered him to be the Visitor ; if he actually possessed that character, he might proceed to suspend and deprive the Vice-master for disobedience, and the Court itself could not do more ; if he had not such an authority already, they could not give it him. They still however paused as to the step most proper to be taken, whether of quashing the writ, or allowing the return made by Dr. Walker ; after a little further delay, they quashed the

Mandamus
quashed by
the Court.

CHAP.
XX.
1737.

writ ; declaring at the same time, that they did not intend thereby to decide the question whether the Bishop was or was not general Visitor of the College.

A third mandamus procured to enforce the execution of the sentence.

Counsel were still of opinion that by a slight variation in the form of process, a judicial decision might be obtained which would effect the object of Bentley's deprivation. This was by a mandamus to the Bishop of Ely, to do his duty *as General Visitor*, in compelling the Vice-master's execution of the sentence. The change seems so small, that at first sight it is not very obvious in what this process differed from that which had been just overruled : but it was thought that the mandamus in its present shape could only be resisted by contesting the fact of the Bishop's being General Visitor ; a point upon which the Judges were known to have formed an opinion in the affirmative. Colbatch therefore entertained strong hopes of the result, and thought that one more hearing would dispose of the question in their favour : his confederate, Smith, was not so sanguine, and judged that they were 'certain of nothing but delay.' Their party had lately received an accession by the return of Mr. Parne : this gentleman thought that the conditions of his treaty with the Master, though strictly observed by himself, had been neglected by the other party ; and that, while he had abstained from giving any aid to the prosecution, his pupils were excluded from their fair access to scholarships and fellowships : accordingly, after a strong and menacing letter to Bentley, calculated to produce nothing but hostility, he declared open war, and assisted the prosecutors with his money and advice. The Doctor's resentment on this occasion was very great ; and traditionary stories are still in existence, of the indignation with which he was heard to speak of 'that rascal Parne.' One proof of his resentment I can discover from the

Parne re-joins the prosecutors.

Conclusion-book : Bentley, who had absented himself from all College meetings for nearly three years, now; for the last time in his life, presided at a Seniority, for the purpose of renewing and enforcing the order passed in 1729, obliging the tutors to pay in advance the dues of their pupils to the College : a measure which it is clear, from the time and circumstances, was intended as an annoyance to Mr. Parne, and was likely to pre-occupy the spare money which he might have destined for law expenses. This order was subscribed, as in extraordinary cases, by the Senior Fellows, and among the rest by Johnson, the late promoter, who had obtained the sentence of expulsion against the Master. From this circumstance, and from his being admitted about the same time to the office of pandoxator, it appears that he had acquiesced in those measures, which counteracted and rendered nugatory all his long and painful exertions in the cause¹⁰.

CHAP.
XX.
1737.

Nov. 8,
1737.

In the meantime the new action pursued its course through the Court of King's Bench. Lord Hardwicke, just after he had pronounced the decision on the last case, was invested with the Great Seal, which became vacant by the death of Lord Talbot ; and continued for several months to unite in his own person the two highest legal offices of Lord Chancellor and Chief Justice. At length he was succeeded in the latter by Sir William Lee, the Judge who had in 1731 expressed an opinion stronger than the rest of the Bench in favour of the validity of King Edward's statutes, and the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ely. But it seemed as if a spell attended the affairs of Trinity College, whenever they were brought into the Court of King's Bench. Although the cases were managed by some

Feb. 21,
1736-37.

June 1737.
Chief Jus-
tice Lee.

¹⁰ Mr. Johnson gave up to Dr. Colbatch his papers and letters relating to the prosecution which he had carried on for five or six years against Dr. Bentley : they have been preserved along with Colbatch's own papers.

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

April 22.

of the ablest lawyers at the bar, yet they never could be moulded and fashioned into such a shape, as to extract a definite and substantial judgment from the Court. The cause was not brought to a final hearing till Easter Term in 1738, when Bentley's counsel made two objections to the Rule : first that the Bishop was not General Visitor ; secondly, that supposing him to be such, yet the sentence had been pronounced not in that character, but as Special Visitor : that it was therefore inconsistent to compel the execution as General Visitor, and that the Vice-master could not be obliged by the statutes of Edward VI. to execute a sentence founded on those of Queen Elizabeth. The latter plea went the full length of maintaining in argument, what had been for some time apparent in fact, that the 40th statute of Elizabeth was ineffectual and nugatory, since the Bishop had no means of enforcing the sentence which he might pronounce ; and, consequently, that there existed no authority which could bring the Master of Trinity to punishment for collegiate misdemeanours. The counsel on the other side denied that the two jurisdictions were inconsistent ; nor did the Judges give any countenance to such a position : but they refused to compel the Bishop to exercise the power of a General Visitor, because it was doubtful whether he possessed it or not. The suit, they said, should have been renewed in a different way ; either by disputing the validity of Dr. Walker's return in the first cause, or ' by bringing a feigned action by consent.' The latter method was intended, I presume, to subject the question of fact, as to the Visitor of the College, to the verdict of a jury : which resource, obvious as it may seem, was now hinted at for the first time. The Court thinking this a question not fit to be decided upon motion, discharged the Rule.

Court dis-
charges the
Rule.

Thus finally terminated all attempts to procure the expulsion of Dr. Bentley from his mastership: the lawyers suggested, that as the mode of action recommended by the Bench would prove difficult and expensive, the Fellows would be wise if they determined to push the matter no further. However, I think it probable that Dr. Colbatch, who considered it a duty due to his injured College, never to relax in the pursuit of justice, would have embarked in a new process, had not an event almost immediately followed, which rendered further proceedings impracticable; this was the death of Bishop Greene, at the age of fourscore: thus in fact, the course of nature, and not the determination of law, put a period to the contest¹¹.

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

Death of
Bp. Greene.
May 18.

The success of this struggle kept up with unexampled spirit and obstinacy for ten years, must be attributed principally to the acuteness, address, and skilful tactics of Dr. Bentley himself, seconded by the zeal of his professional friend, Mr. Greaves. Many persons would have sunk under the agitation of such proceedings, every stage of which threatened his ruin: but he was cool and collected in his operations, he never gave his enemies an advantage over him, nor ever failed to seize the right occasion for a successful manœuvre. His aim was always to distress and baffle his antagonists; while it must be allowed, that he seemed strangely regardless of the opinion which might be entertained of the rectitude of his own conduct.

Termination of the efforts to procure Bentley's expulsion.

In the perusal of the foregoing narrative some, perhaps, may have remarked that Dr. Bentley might have been an excellent lawyer; others may have thought his talents adapted for military command:

¹¹ Bishop Greene was succeeded at Ely by Dr. Robert Butts, the Bishop of Norwich, an old member of Trinity College.

CHAP. but all must agree that such a display suited any
 XX. character rather than that of a learned and dignified
 1738. clergyman.

College dis-
 tressed by
 the expenses
 of the suit.

Of the contributors to this long and complicated suit, much the largest share of expense, and all the responsibility of management, fell to the lot of Dr. Colbatch¹². We have more than once mentioned that the Master defrayed the whole of his own expenses from the College stock. The amount of those charges, as I find them separately stated in the bursar's books, was 3657*l.*: but part of them being placed under other heads, I apprehend that the sum was really not less than 4000*l.* This extraordinary burthen, being double the amount of a year's dividend to the whole society, was beyond the means of their revenue to sustain: a great and increasing deficit appeared in the annual accounts, and the immediate prospect of starvation presented itself to the College. In this emergency, the late contending parties combined to relieve the common distress. Large sums were borrowed at interest: Walker and Johnson visited in company the College estates in different parts of the kingdom, and took measures for improving the revenues: both Bentley and Colbatch refrained for several years from receiving their dividends and other dues, and only took the arrears when they found that the great pressure was relieved. However, the College was not able, for a long course of time, to extricate itself from the debt which the Master's defence had occasioned.

Bentley having attained his seventy-seventh year before he was delivered from the danger of expulsion,

¹² Whiston says that Colbatch expended nearly a thousand pounds of his own money in this cause: a statement which probably falls short of the fact. *Memoirs of his own Life*, vol. i. p. 430.

the reader will expect to see him pass the remnant of his days in the noiseless repose so naturally coveted by old age. He will therefore be startled at learning that, so far from this being the case, he scarcely gave himself time to enjoy the sense of his security, before he plunged into a fresh law-suit, and became in his turn the prosecutor of his persevering and unappeasable enemy, Colbatch. The latter had refused to pay the small sums annually demanded of him as Rector of Orwell, at the visitation of the Archdeacon of Ely, maintaining that those charges, called procurations, or proxies, were only due to an Archdeacon who personally visited the parishes within his jurisdiction, as being intended to defray his expenses in travelling. Bentley had never once during the thirty-seven years that he had held the office, inspected the churches and parsonage-houses personally and in detail: the annual visitations, held at Cambridge by himself or his Official, were calculated for no purpose, as his adversary contended, but to receive those procurations to which he had no claim by canon, civil, or statute law. It must be remarked that this neglect of parochial visitations was by no means peculiar to Bentley, but was frequent and even general at that period: the zealous attention to their important functions which distinguishes most English Archdeacons of the present day, was then very rare; and to this cause we may attribute the decayed state of some of our churches, and the neglect and ruin of many parsonage-houses, which has in numerous cases entailed upon the Establishment the evils of non-residence.

As Colbatch had systematically refused to pay his proxies for the last fifteen years, it is probable that the Archdeacon had long meditated to call him to account, whenever he might have his hands at liberty.

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

Bentley
brings an
action
against Col-
batch as
Archdeacon
of Ely.

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

Ecclesiastical Pro-
curations.
July 14.

Accordingly, just before his visitation this year, his proctor, Burrowes, made the demand of proxies and arrears, giving at the same time a notice of process in case of non-compliance; and upon Colbatch replying that they were not due, he immediately instituted a suit against him in the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of Ely, before Dr. Wharton Peck, the Chancellor of the Diocese. The sum demanded of the Rector of Orwell was three shillings and sixpence for each year. While joining issue in this new litigation, one party undoubtedly conceived himself to be acting upon public principles, such as animated Hampden when he resisted the payment of as small a sum, the quota assessed upon him for ship-money: the other believed that he was discharging a duty due to his station and preferment, in thus vindicating the rights of his successors with the trouble and expense of a law-suit. But it is probable that bystanders gave a different interpretation to their conduct, and could discover in their proceedings only a specimen of exasperated and implacable animosity, ill befitting persons arrived almost at the limit of human existence. It did seem, indeed, as if these gray-headed litigants were so habituated to a state of controversy, that the excitement of a law-suit had become as necessary to them as that of hazard is to the inveterate gamester.

Henry Monson, LL.D. a Fellow of Trinity Hall, the same who was afterwards made Professor of Civil Law, was commissioned, as surrogate of the Chancellor, to discharge the office of judge in this cause. The proceedings were opened with all formality in Great St. Mary's Church; but the sittings of the Court were generally held at Dr. Monson's college-rooms. Thomas Burrowes, one of the Esquire-beadles, acted as proctor for the Archdeacon; and

Thomas Bennet, who was afterwards elected to the same office, for Dr. Colbatch. The adjournments, deliberations, and arguments upon points of form, were so numerous, that this little court seemed to mimic the procrastination of those high tribunals with which our readers have been lately conversant. The ecclesiastical law affords abundant resources for delay ; and although the question at issue lay in a very small compass, the Court contrived to postpone its decision for the full space of a year and a half : and in all this time the defendant was not permitted to adduce those arguments, which he had accumulated from his legal reading, to prove that the claim for proxies could only be justified in a parochial visitation.

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

We need not be detained with the several stages of this petty action : I apprehend much of the time to have been really employed in consulting eminent civilians in London upon the merits of the question, involving, as it did, a point of considerable importance to most Archdeacons in the kingdom. Opinions were entirely in favour of a right, which was established by the undeviating practice of above a hundred years : but it was also proved that the ancient claim upon the Rector of Orwell was only one shilling. At length the cause was ripe for a decision ; and Dr. Monson pronounced his judgment in January 1740, in favour of Dr. Bentley, condemning Dr. Colbatch in the payment of six shillings for proxies and arrears from the year 1734, and in 20*l.* for a bill of costs, reduced by taxation to that amount.

Decision in
Bentley's
favour.

Colbatch, believing the proceedings of the court to have been irregular and partial, and convinced that the judgment was in opposition to the maxims of civilians and canonists, with whose writings he

Colbatch's
pamphlet.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

was peculiarly conversant, determined upon an appeal from the Bishop's Commissary to the Court of Arches: but finding that the opinions of the profession were decidedly against him, he was induced to forego that purpose, and to make his appeal to the public in a pamphlet, comprising his grounds in law, justice, and reason, for withholding those payments which had been the subject of the action. This tract, called 'The Case of Proxies payable to Ecclesiastical Visitors,' conveys a good deal of information concerning the early discipline and practice of Christian churches, and displays an extensive acquaintance with writers upon the canon law, and ecclesiastical history: its perusal is by no means unattended by amusement; and it should be mentioned to Colbatch's credit, that he so far subdued his personal feelings, as to abstain from any thing like invective against the great adversary, whom he was compelled once more to leave in possession of the victory. Nearly half the publication is occupied by a reply to a posthumous tract of Bishop Stillingfleet, recently published with his works, which took a different view of the question, and considered the payment of proxies as intended to exonerate the clergy from the expense of entertaining the Archdeacon on his visitation. Of this great authority against him Colbatch had not been aware, till after the termination of the trial: it was an Archdeacon's charge, but not printed by the Bishop himself among his ecclesiastical tracts; nor does it bear marks of great research. In regard to the propriety of maintaining a long established practice, the general opinion must be with Stillingfleet; but if it be considered merely as a question of antiquarian curiosity, it is certain that Colbatch, whose mind had been long exerted upon this particular point, had carried his

enquiries further, and established his positions more securely than that illustrious prelate¹³.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

The last time that I find Dr. Bentley appearing in public, it was in the capacity of judge, on an extraordinary and alarming occasion. It was discovered that atheistical principles had insinuated themselves among a party of young men in the University; who having formed a society with some persons in town, were anxiously employed in propagating their tenets. We may generally remark that they who throw off all dependence upon revealed religion, with great inconsistency attach their faith to some one leader, as infallible, and embrace all his dogmas with the most slavish submission. The oracle of this confederacy was Mr. Samuel Strutt, of the Temple, a writer now forgotten, who had dressed up the arguments of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and other enemies of religion, in a new shape, and published them a few years before in a book called 'A Philosophical Enquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions;' this his disciples were satisfied to make their code of faith, and the panacea for every doubt¹⁴. Of the members of this fraternity, one only is known to posterity, Paul

Discovery
of a sect of
Atheists.

Strutt.

¹³ The title at length is, "*The Case of Proxies payable to Ecclesiastical Visitors fully stated: and the Question discussed, whether those payments can upon any account become due from the Parochial Clergy to an Archdeacon, who doth not visit them and their Churches in person? With some Remarks on part of a posthumous Discourse of the late Bishop Stillingfleet, on the antiquity and legality of Archdeacons' Visitations.* By JOHN COLBATCH, D.D. Rector of Orwell, in the Diocese of Ely, and Casuistical Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, 1741."

¹⁴ This book was published in 1732. Strutt, who was dead at the time of which we are speaking, had been a writer in the *Craftsman*, the opposition journal which assailed Sir Robert Walpole's government with great ability. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. ix. p. 198, is an amusing attempt of the editor of the *Craftsman* to exonerate himself from the suspicion of Strutt's intimacy or friendship, which however is fairly proved upon him by the ministerial writer in the *Daily Gazetteer* (p. 203, of the same volume) who had gained access to Strutt's papers.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

Whitehead.

Ducket.

Whitehead, a poet who trod closely in the steps of Pope, and assailed the friends of Ministers with the lash of furious satire: his poem of 'Manners,' the most successful imitation of Pope's style, had just appeared: but his infidel principles, pursuing their natural course, procured him in time a different kind of notoriety, as secretary of the too notorious brotherhood of Mednam Abbey. Tinkler Ducket, a Fellow of Caius College, who had joined this society of atheists, was pursuing a system of proselytism in his College, when the existence of the sect was discovered by a letter from him addressed to one of his converts. This paper being dropped in the quadrangle, was picked up by another Fellow of the College, Mr. Burrough, then Esquire Beadle, and afterwards Master of Caius, who enjoys the reputation of architect of the Senate House. His reading a letter so found, gives us but a mean opinion of his delicacy or sense of honour: but upon discovery of its contents he felt it his duty to lay them before the authorities of the University. The letter amounted to a full confession on the part of Ducket, of his having reached the *ne plus ultra* of atheism; displayed his veneration for 'the adorable Father Strutt,' the founder of the sect, and expressed his anxiety to remove all scruples and prejudices which might yet linger in the mind of his correspondent. It also revealed incidentally the names of five or six of the fraternity¹⁵.

This discovery occasioned great uneasiness to the University; Dr. Whaley, the Vice-chancellor, went

¹⁵ Ducket's letter itself may be seen in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1739, vol. ix. p. 203. It had been written Oct. 1734, four years before the discovery; from which circumstance, I cannot help suspecting that it was dropped intentionally by his correspondent, with the design of betraying the writer and his compeers. This supposition, if true, may account for its not being restored unread to the owner.

CHAP.
XX
1739.

Public trial.

to town to consult Archbishop Potter and Bishops Gibson and Sherlock upon the expediency of public proceedings. In the mean time, the existence of a school of atheism in the University became a matter of general conversation; and it was found necessary to bring Ducket to a public trial upon the charge of entertaining and propagating such opinions¹⁶. The Vice-chancellor's Court was held in the Law-Schools, March 9th, when the accusation was proved by the production of his own letter; and was confirmed by a remarkable specimen of the practical results of atheism. He had been endeavouring to seduce a female, who was the object of his affections; and strove to remove her conscientious and religious scruples, by persuading her that matrimony was but an institution of human authority, that it was an affront to God to imagine that he would first implant passions in his creatures, and then forbid the gratification of them; adding, as a natural consequence of this reasoning, that her compliance, instead of a sin, would be the highest act of benevolence: at the same time, he endeavoured to remove her fears of discovery, by assuring her that he possessed drops which were a sovereign preventive against pregnancy. These facts were deposed at the trial by the lady herself; who also produced a letter in his hand-writing, containing arguments to the same effect. Ducket's defence was a premeditated speech, delivered, as an eye-witness records, 'with grace and intrepidity:' he justified, by quotations from Locke and other

¹⁶ Dr. Waterland writing from Windsor to Dr. Zach. Grey, Jan. 31, 1738-39, says, "I am very sorry to hear the ill-news from Caius College, which is got to town, it seems, and alarms many good men there." Mr. Nichols, who prints this letter in his *Illustrations of Literature*, vol. iv. p. 390, observes in a note "What this 'ill-news' was, I leave to be discovered by some future commentator." It now requires no commentator to discover the allusion.

CHAP.
XX.
1730.

writers, freedom of thought and private judgment, and maintained that the atheist was as capable of moral and social virtue as the believer. He declared, however, that he had been for some time convinced of the fallacies of the 'Philosophical Enquiry,' and was become once more a believer in God and Christianity: and to prove the truth of his repentance, he brought the evidence of some persons who had heard him condemn the 'Philosophical Enquiry.' But as it appeared that he had used the arguments of an infidel to debase the principles of a female, subsequently to that pretended recantation, his apology availed him nothing. The Court however adjourned, to deliberate upon their sentence.

March 23.
Court ad-
journd to
Bentley's
Lodge.

Upon the next Court-day, only eight Heads of colleges appeared in the Schools; whereas a majority of the whole number was indispensably required to sanction the judgment which the Vice-chancellor was then ready to pronounce. Dr. Bentley's liability to catch cold did not suffer him to leave his house: accordingly, in compliment to the Father of the University, and the early refuter of atheistical tenets, the court was adjourned to Trinity Lodge. Here some persons who generally condemned his words and actions, were scandalized at instances of levity, as ill-suited the solemnity of the occasion. Tradition in the University still records a jest then uttered by Bentley: he enquired of those about him, 'which was the atheist?' and on Duckett being pointed out, who was a small and spare personage, he exclaimed, "What! is that the atheist? I expected to have seen a man as big as Burrough the beadle¹⁷." The

¹⁷ I cannot determine whether the character in this jest was Mr. Burrough, or his brother-mace Mr. Burrowes, not knowing which was the larger man: the truth is that the portly appearance of the three Esquire-

alleged offence being proved in its full extent, sentence was pronounced upon Ducket of expulsion from the University, and the Senate passed a vote for taking away his degrees. His fate excited no compassion, since he was a vicious as well as a vain man; and it was no small aggravation, that he was about the age of thirty, and had taken holy orders in the Church ¹⁸.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

Ducket's
expulsion.

In the year 1736, an association was established in London for the 'Encouragement of Learning,' consisting of numerous personages distinguished for rank and genius; who subscribed to assist authors by publishing their works under the auspices and in part at the cost of the Society. It was an important object for this institution to start with eclat, by printing the work of some great author; and accordingly they offered to commence with the publication of Dr. Bentley's *Manilius*, which was known to be ready for the press. The Doctor, to their surprise and mortification, instead of gratefully accepting the proffered honour, started certain objections to the tendency of such a society, which had never occurred to its liberal supporters, and condemned with great freedom the whole undertaking. Piqued at this unexpected rejection of their offer, they addressed a similar proposal to Bentley's old enemy, Conyers Middleton, who was at that time engaged upon his *Life of Cicero*, which they solicited his permission to publish. He however preferred the more lucrative method of print-

Society for
the en-
courage-
ment of
learning.

beadles at that day, did much credit to University cheer. They are described by Christopher Smart, in a copy of Latin verses, by the following periphrasis,

"Pinguia tergemorum abdomina Bedellorum."

¹⁸ My account of the proceedings against Ducket is supplied partly by the *University Registers*, partly by Cole, and Tunstall, the Public Orator, in a letter to Lord Oxford. Both these gentlemen were present at the trial.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

ing by subscription : and the Society were obliged to content themselves with authors of less celebrity.

The experience however of a few years proved the justice of Bentley's exceptions : the design of the Society, liberal and spirited as it undoubtedly was, could not be executed without interfering with the interests of the booksellers, who are in reality the most efficient patrons of literature : it became therefore the policy of that whole fraternity to oppose the success of their general rival. In a short time, it was found necessary to take in the co-operation of some booksellers, as partners : but even then the liberality of the Society to its authors left for the traders such small profits, that they felt no interest in the circulation of its books : and after twelve years' perseverance, it was found that the whole funds of the Society, consisting of about 2000*l*, had been expended, without any effectual advance towards compassing its public-spirited objects ¹⁹.

Dr. Bentley having resolved to give to the world

¹⁹ A full account of the operations of this Society, a list of its original members, and of the books printed by it from 1736 to 1748, the time of its dissolution, is given by Mr. Nichols, in his interesting and valuable repository, the *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 90-97. Mr. Alexander Gordon, the Secretary of the Society, writes to Dr. Richardson, the Master of Emanuel College, begging him to communicate their offer to Dr. Middleton, and speaking with great indignation of Bentley's rejection of the honour intended for him : " You have no doubt heard in what a discouraging way Dr. Bentley has used our Society : for tho' his work of Manilius was ready to be printed, and he desired by several people to have it published by the Society, he not only raised such ill-grounded objections against the institution itself, but chose to throw it into the hands of a common bookseller, rather than into those of the Society ; which has not only made several gentlemen of letters and high life exclaim against the discouraging and ungenerous act, but will be recorded in the learned world, perhaps, when he is dead and rotten. Such men deserve fleeing from booksellers ; and I am mistaken if he or his editors will not meet with it : I am sure none will regret them. But it is hoped, nay expected, from the excellent character Dr. Middleton bears in the world, that our Society will meet with other treatment from him."

his Manilius, which had been prepared for publication no less than forty-five years before, it was printed at the newly-established press of Henry Woodfall. In elegance of type and paper it is superior to any of Bentley's other books, and is as beautiful in appearance as the Society itself could have made it. It is embellished with a remarkably fine engraving, by Vertue, of his own portrait painted by Thornhill in 1710²⁰, and illustrated by a representation of the celestial sphere of the ancients, taken from a model of the globe in the Farnese Palace, lately brought from Rome by Mr. Martin Folkes, the eminent antiquarian scholar, and the well-known President of the Royal Society. The Doctor thinking his edition of Homer the utmost that he could now hope to accomplish, committed to his nephew, Richard, by whom this volume was carried through the press, the task of writing the preface; the object of which was to defend his opinion of the age and character of Manilius, and to explain the *subsidia* used in this edition. He establishes satisfactorily, as I think, by internal arguments, that the author of the *Astronomicon*, whoever he might be, wrote in the reign of Augustus; and accounts for the frequent harshness of his diction, by supposing him to have been a foreigner.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

Publication
of Bentley's
Manilius.

The remarks which we have had occasion to make upon our critic's editions of other Latin poets, are for the most part applicable to that of Manilius. His observations are always ingenious, acute, and well worthy of consideration: but a great many of his emendations had better have been spared; and most

²⁰ From this portrait is taken the engraving, which forms the frontispiece of this work. Vertue's engraving was always considered by those who had seen Bentley as an admirable likeness. It is within the recollection of persons still living that his barber, who used to dress him in his latter years, said, whenever he saw this print hanging up in any College rooms, "It is as like him as if he was speaking to you!"

CHAP.
XX.
1738.

of the verses which he condemns as spurious, appear as much the offspring of the poet as any others in the book : upon the whole however, the reader will find more to approve than to condemn. But to say the truth, no great accession of reputation could be obtained by an edition of Manilius, since he is a poet never likely to be generally read : with the exception of three or four digressions, both the beauties and faults of which strongly remind us of Ovid, the perusal of the poem is a work of rather severe study : this may be owing principally to the abstruse and uninviting nature of the subject ; as Manilius himself declares,

*Intendas animum ; nec dulcia carmina quæras ;
Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.*

Nevertheless, one cannot help recollecting with what poetical charms even this subject is invested, when it falls into the hands of the author of the *Georgics* ²¹.

Bentley has
a paralytic
stroke.

I believe it to have been shortly after this time that Dr. Bentley was afflicted by an attack of palsy, and was in consequence forced to abandon all hope of executing his edition of Homer, or any other literary work. Perhaps the reader may be surprised, after so much minute detail of the life of my hero, that I should be unacquainted with the precise time when he was struck by this warning of mortality. Nothing however that I have ever seen, notices the period of the blow ; but of the fact itself, there can be no doubt. It is a tradition in College, that in his latter days he was paralytic ; and Mr. Cumberland distinctly records

²¹ Some very able and interesting observations upon Manilius, as well as upon Bentley's criticisms, may be found in an article of the *Monthly Review*, vol. lxxi. p. 456, which proceeded from the pen of Dr. Parr. It is a critique of an edition of Manilius, published in 1783, by Mr. Edmund Burton, a gentleman of fortune, formerly a Fellow of Trinity College.

that when he remembered his grandfather, he was disabled by that malady from quitting his chair without the assistance of a servant. At the trial of Duckett, in the early part of 1739, an eye-witness observes that he appeared in perfect health: and Taylor, in his *Lectiones Lysiacæ*, published the same year, expresses the general and anxious expectation of Bentley's edition of Homer, upon which he was then daily employed²². After this year, I hear no more of his pursuing that work: his notes, which he was writing out in a copy-book for the press²³, end abruptly in the sixth book of the Iliad; so that I have little doubt of their having been broken off and the hopes of the classical world defeated by his paralytic seizure. I apprehend that the stroke was not very severe, and that he partially recovered from its effects: he certainly continued able to amuse himself with reading till a few days before his death; but all possibility of continuing his editorial labours was precluded.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

Is disabled
from publishing
Homer.

In the early part of the following year Dr. Bentley sustained a calamity of a still severer nature, by the death of his wife, in the fortieth year of their union²⁴. Deprived of the comfort and support of her society and virtues, he felt for the first time the real afflictions of mortality. His daughters were both married: the

1740.
February.
Death of
Mrs. Bentley.

²² Taylor, *Lectiones Lysiacæ*, cap. 9. (tom. vi. 287. ed. Reiske.)

²³ This little manuscript volume must be that which Professor Thiersch, in his Greek Grammar, calls Bentley's 'full and elaborate Treatise' on the Digamma: he says, that it was shown to him, along with the *Codex Bentleianus*, (the volume which had been sent to Heyne, being in fact his corrections on the margin of Stephens's edition) in Trinity Library in the year 1815. The short and cursory inspection which the Professor gave to this copy-book, seems to have led him into the error: it is nothing more than what I have described in the text.

²⁴ The Register of All Saints parish mentions, on Feb. 29, 1739-40, the payment of the chancel-fee for the wife of Dr. Bentley, who died in Trinity Lodge, and was buried in Huntingdonshire. Cumberland in his Memoirs, p. 15, gives some account of her character and death.

CHAP.
XX.
1739.

Bentley's
intimates in
old age.

eldest had first been the wife of Mr. Humphrey Ridge, a gentleman of good family in Hampshire, who in less than a year left her a widow. After his death she returned to her father's house, and solaced by her attentions the affliction of his declining years. In this duty she was joined by her sister, Mrs. Cumberland, who, after the death of her mother, passed much of her time with her family at Trinity Lodge²⁵. Surrounded by such friends, the Doctor experienced the joint pressure of old age and infirmity as lightly as is consistent with the lot of humanity. He continued to amuse himself with reading; and though nearly confined to his arm-chair, was able to enjoy the society of his friends, and several rising scholars who sought the conversation of the veteran Grecian: with them he still discussed the readings of classical authors, recited Homer, and expounded the doctrine of the digamma; and, as it appears from the recollections of one of his visitors, Dr. Salter, used to communicate the earlier events of his own literary career. Walter Taylor, the Greek Professor, an *eleve* of his own, was much in his society; as well as his more distinguished namesake, John Taylor. Markland is also mentioned among those who were admitted to his conversation; and his two nephews, Thomas and Richard Bentley, both of whom were attached to him with filial regard, and had shaped their studies agreeably to his taste and advice, were the frequent companions of his old age. But his constant associate, at all times except in his hours of study, was the Vice-master, Walker, whose firmness and attachment had borne him safe through the perils of the late prosecution. His good-humour and veneration for his aged superior, contributed to make the attentions of Dr. Walker a great

²⁵ *Cumberland's Memoirs*, p. 26.

CHAP.
XX.
1740.

comfort to the declining days of the Master. Meanwhile the whole government of the College was left in the hands of the Vice-master, who seems to have managed matters with such address, that the four years of Bentley's life, subsequent to the prosecution, were, as far as I can discover, free from disturbance or uneasiness. It is a proof of no common tact and judgment, that after so violent an agitation for many years, he should have been able to calm the excited and angry feelings with which the Society had been distracted.

As the minor particulars of the lives of great men are objects of curiosity, it is recorded that Bentley enjoyed smoking tobacco with his constant companion ; a practice which he did not begin before his seventieth year : he is stated also to have been an admirer of good Port wine, while he thought contemptuously of Claret, which, he said, ' would be Port if it could.' He generally wore, while sitting in his study, a hat with an enormous brim, as a shade to protect his eyes ; and he affected more than ever a fashion of addressing his familiars with the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee*.

His domestic habits.

Some amusing recollections of Bentley in his old age have been printed by his grandson, Mr. Cumberland, in the ' Memoirs of his own Life.' It would be injustice to that author to give them in any words but his own ; since the lively and characteristic style in which the anecdotes are told, constitutes their chief value. As he was a child of ten years old at the time of his grandfather's death, it is not likely that his impressions were very vivid of any particulars, except the old man's personal kindness towards himself. He had opportunities, indeed, of learning from his mother and other relations accurate particulars respecting his distinguished ancestor, but that he did not avail himself of them, appears from the frequent mistakes which

Cumberland's account of him.

CHAP.
XX.
1740.

he commits. It was his object to paint the domestic character of the great scholar in a pleasing and amiable light, and to counteract the general impression which prevailed of his stern and overbearing manners : to this purpose he devotes the best efforts of his polished and agreeable style.

“ Of Doctor Richard Bentley, my maternal grandfather, I shall next take leave to speak. Of him I have perfect recollection. His person, his dignity, his language and his love, fixed my early attention, and stamped both his image and his words upon my memory. His literary works are known to all, his private character is still misunderstood by many ; to that I shall confine myself, and, putting aside the enthusiasm of a descendant, I can assert, with the veracity of a biographer, that he was neither cynical, as some have represented him, nor overbearing and fastidious in the degree, as he has been described by many,” *Cumberland's Memoirs*, p. 7.

“ I had a sister²⁶ somewhat elder than myself. Had there been any of that sternness in my grandfather, which is so falsely imputed to him, it may well be supposed we should have been awed into silence in his presence, to which we were admitted every day. Nothing can be further from the truth ; he was the unwearied patron and promoter of all our childish sports and sallies ; at all times ready to detach himself from any topic of conversation to take an interest and bear his part in our amusements. The eager curiosity natural to our age, and the questions it gave birth to, so teasing to many parents, he, on the contrary, attended to and encouraged, as the claims of infant reason never to be evaded or abused ; strongly recommending, that to all such inquiries answer should be given according to the strictest truth, and information dealt to us in the clearest terms, as a sacred duty never to be departed from. I have broken in upon him many a time in his hours of study, when he would put his book aside, ring his hand-bell for his servant, and be led to his shelves to take down a picture-book for my amusement. I do not say that his good-nature always gained its object, as the pictures which his books generally supplied me with were anatomical drawings of dissected bodies, very little calculated to communicate delight ; but he had nothing better to produce ; and surely such an effort on his part, however unsuccessful, was no feature of a cynic :

²⁶ Cumberland had three sisters, and all living about the period of these anecdotes. See the will of Dr. Bentley, *Appendix*, No. IV.

a 'cynic should be made of sterner stuff.' I have had from him, at times, whilst standing at his elbow, a complete and entertaining narrative of his school-boy days, with the characters of his different masters very humourously displayed, and the punishments described, which they at times would wrongfully inflict upon him for seeming to be idle and regardless of his task, 'When the dunces,' he would say, 'could not discover that I was pondering it in my mind, and fixing it more firmly in my memory, than if I had been bawling it out amongst the rest of my school-fellows.'

CHAP.
XX.
1740.

"Once, and only once, I recollect his giving me a gentle rebuke for making a most outrageous noise in the room over his library and disturbing him in his studies; I had no apprehension of anger from him, and confidently answered that I could not help it, as I had been at battledore and shuttlecock with Master Gooch, the Bishop of Ely's son²⁷. 'And I have been at this sport with his father,' he replied; 'but thine has been the more amusing game; so there's no harm done.'" *Ibid.* p. 7.

"His ordinary style of conversation was naturally lofty, and his frequent use of *thou* and *thee* with his familiars carried with it a kind of dictatorial tone, that savoured more of the closet than the court; this is readily admitted, and this on first approaches might mislead a stranger; but the native candour and inherent tenderness of his heart could not long be veiled from observation, for his feelings and affections were at once too impulsive to be long repressed, and he too careless of concealment to attempt at qualifying them." *Ibid.* p. 9.

"How liable he was to deviate from the strict line of justice, by his partiality to the side of mercy, appears from the anecdote of the thief, who robbed him of his plate, and was seized and brought before him with the very articles upon him: the natural process in this man's case pointed out the road to prison; my grandfather's process was more summary, but not quite so legal. While Commissary Greaves, who was then present, and of counsel for the College *Ex officio*, was expatiating on the crime, and prescribing the measures obviously to be taken with the offender, Doctor Bentley interposed, saying, 'Why tell the man he is a thief? he knows that well enough, without thy information, Greaves.—Harkye, fellow, thou see'st the trade which thou hast taken up is an unprofitable trade, therefore get thee gone, lay aside an occupation by which thou can'st gain nothing but a halter, and follow that by which thou may'st earn an honest

²⁷ This is an anticipation. Dr. Gooch did not become Bishop of Ely till several years after Bentley's death. He was at that time Bishop of Norwich.

CHAP. livelihoood.' Having said this, he ordered him to be set at liberty
 XX. against the remonstrances of the by-standers, and insisting upon it
 1740. that the fellow was duly penitent for his offence, bade him go his way
 and never steal again." *Ibid.* p. 14.

Pope's fresh
 offence
 against
 Bentley.

It was at this time, when Bentley was too much sunk under the load of years and infirmity to be an object of jealousy or resentment, that Pope chose to write against him a severe satire, and Warburton assisted his friend in holding him up to ridicule and contempt. The spleen of the satirist appears to have been lately increased and irritated by the interference of Thomas Bentley, who had, indiscreetly perhaps, taken up the cudgels in his uncle's cause, and addressed an angry letter to Pope in some of the journals. As none of the commentators have given a clue to find this epistle, I can only conjecture from circumstances, that it was written in 1740, and that it was intended to resent some ridicule cast upon our Aristarchus. That point however is of no importance; few people, except Pope, would have suffered themselves to be disturbed by such effusions; and a writer who passed his life in satirizing others, ought not to have complained of occasional attempts at retaliation. It appears from his correspondence with Warburton, that the latter had suggested to the poet some ludicrous comparison, as applicable to the uncle and nephew: Pope's reply betrays much asperity and anger: "Your simile," says he, "of B— and his nephew, would make an excellent epigram. But all satire is become so ineffectual, when the last step that virtue can stand upon, *shame*, is taken away, that epigram must expect to do nothing even in its own little province, and upon its own little subjects²⁸." Not long

Oct. 27,
 1740.

²⁸ *Pope's Works*, vol. ix. p. 379. There is an epigram upon Bentley, given by Mr. Bowles, as Pope's, he having found it in his hand-writing: but

afterwards, the scheme of the fourth Book of the Dunciad, was suggested to the satirist by Warburton; here it was arranged that the Aristarchus of Cambridge should perform a conspicuous character. Even the greatest admirers of Pope must acknowledge that this piece, relating as it does to subjects which have no connection with those ridiculed in the three former books, is an incongruous appendage to his poem: nor was it very decent to introduce his sarcasms upon such characters as Bentley, Clarke, and Mead, the ornaments of the age in which they lived, as the sequel of a satire, designed to ridicule the dulness and poverty of the scribblers who wrote for bread in the purlieus of Smithfield and Grub-Street. The long oration assigned to Bentley, who appears as the representative of the two Universities, consists in reflections upon the whole system of academical studies, whether classical, philosophical, or metaphysical. Though some of the verses are excellent, the satire is too general to be felt, the irony is not happily sustained, and the fiction of the speaker is inappropriate. The opening lines are personally applicable, and are meant to describe his appearance and manner:

CHAP.
XX.
1741.

Fourth
book of the
Dunciad.

“ As many quit the streams that murm’ring fall
To lull the sons of Marg’ret and Clare Hall,
Where Bentley late tempestuous wont to sport
In troubled waters, but now sleeps in Port.

even the evidence of his hand-writing is hardly sufficient to make us believe that the great poet was the father of so paltry a production:—

“ Did Milton’s prose, O Charles, thy death defend?
A furious foe unconscious proves a friend.
On Milton’s verse did Bentley comment? Know
A weak, officious friend becomes a foe:
While he but sought his author’s fame to further,
The murd’rous critic has aveng’d thy murder.” Vol. iv. p. 32.

CHAP.
XX.
1741.

Before them march'd that awful Aristarch;
 Plow'd was his front with many a deep remark:
 His hat, which never vail'd to human pride,
 Walker with rev'rence took, and laid aside.
 Low bow'd the rest: he, kingly, did but nod;
 So upright Quakers please both man and God.
 'Mistress! dismiss that rabble from your throne:
 Avaunt—Is Aristarchus yet unknown?
 Thy mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains
 Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.
 Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain:
 Critics like me shall make it prose again.
 Roman and Greek grammarians! know your better,
 Author of something yet more great than letter;
 While tow'ring o'er your alphabet, like Saul,
 Stands our digamma, and o'ertops them all,' "

The conclusion of the scene again exhibits the individual character :

“ ‘ Walker, our hat ! ’—nor more he deign'd to say,
 But stern as Ajax' spectre, strode away.”

Miller the
botanist.

Cumberland is seriously displeased with this allusion, and very gravely maintains the improbability of his grandfather's ever commanding the Vice-master to reach his hat : but it does happen that for this scene the poet had some authority in the following anecdote which had been related to him. Philip Miller, the celebrated botanist, and author of the 'Gardener's Dictionary,' went on an embassy to Cambridge to consult the Aristarchus upon some classical subject, for the advantage of a foreign scholar. He was hospitably received at Trinity Lodge, and after dinner propounded his question ; when Bentley, perhaps not approving this style of consultation, recommended him to 'drink his wine.' Miller however took three opportunities of recurring to the object of his mission, when Bentley, offended, called to his faithful companion, " Walker ! my hat—" and quitted the room

in a manner not unlike that described by the poet²⁹. The Vice-master himself was so far from being mortified at the manner in which his name was connected with Bentley's, that after the Doctor's death he preserved the identical hat, hung upon a peg in his College rooms, and used to point it out to persons who visited him, as a relique and memorial of his revered friend.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

This satire first appeared in 1742, and, I believe, just before the decease of the aged critic. Thomas Bentley was not forgotten; but ere the opportunity occurred for discharging the bile which was nourished against him, he was no longer living to be sensible of its effects. In 1741 he published his handsome and well-known edition of the Hymns of Callimachus; which seems principally intended for the use of schools. His preface consists of a remonstrance against a method, then prevalent, of reading Greek with attention only to the accent, and a neglect of quantity; or, to speak more correctly, of changing the quantities of Greek words, in order to make them correspond with the accents³⁰: but of the exact nature of accent and quantity themselves, it exhibits no very distinct knowledge. The next year appeared his edition of Cæsar, in which the notes of his friend, Dr. Jurin, are given along with his own. In both these publications, the devoted attachment of Thomas to his venerable uncle is conspicuously shown. The termination of the nephew's career was now at hand: being in a bad state of health, he was sent by medical advice to Clifton: here he was making an

Thomas
Bentley's
publication.

²⁹ This anecdote is told by Mr. George Ashby, in some manuscripts in the possession of Sir Thomas Cullum, Bart., communicated to me by his kindness.

³⁰ The only point worthy of notice in this piece is the fact that it was an ordinary practice at that day to pronounce the following words, with the quantities as here marked: *τιθῆμι, κινδύνομος, ἀκριβης, Δημοσθενης*.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

His death.
May 28,
1742.

excursion on the water; when, being very ill, he begged to be put ashore: but before the boat reached the bank he expired³¹. About a year after his death, Pope published his *Dunciad* complete, with its large commentary; and although the object of his resentment was sheltered from him by the grave, he exhibited his anger by a severe reflection. It may be recollected that Thomas had printed, thirty years before, a small edition of Horace, with his uncle's text, dedicated to Lord Harley. It was therefore determined to fasten upon him the couplet in the second book of the *Dunciad*, which had hitherto been understood, as it was undoubtedly designed, to apply to the great Aristarchus, and his well-known dedication of Horace to the Earl of Oxford. *Bentley his mouth with classic flattery opes*, &c. The sting however was comprised in the following commentary:

“Not spoken of the famous Dr. Richard Bentley, but of one Thomas Bentley, a small critic, who aped his uncle in a *little Horace*. The great one was intended to be dedicated to the Lord Halifax, but (on a change of the ministry) was given to the Earl of Oxford; for which reason the little one was dedicated to his son, the Lord Harley.”—

This note, to which Warburton's name is subscribed, goes on to give an extract from the dedication, verbally translated, and concludes with mentioning his offensive letter to Mr. Pope.

In this edition of the *Dunciad* appeared the numerous notes bearing the signature of Bentley, written

³¹ Communicated by Mr. Bentley Warren. He is buried in the church of Clifton, with the following inscription:

Hic jacet Corpus
THOMÆ BENTLEY, LL.D.
Qui obiit xxviii Maii
Anno 1742,
Ætat. 50.

either by Pope or his friend, in imitation of our critic's style: the idea of making an adversary the commentator upon his work being probably borrowed from the example of Swift in his 'Tale of a Tub.'

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

At the same time a dissertation, burlesquing the style of Bentley, under the title of 'Richardus Aristarchus upon the Hero of the Poem,' was prefixed by Warburton. This great writer has attained such high and well-merited reputation for commanding genius and unbounded learning, that it would be but a small addition to his glory to pronounce him an able mimic. But in truth, this performance seems a very ordinary one of its kind; while the publication of such buffoonery against an illustrious scholar, lately dead, for whom, in his sincere judgment, he entertained the highest admiration, is a proof neither of good taste nor good feeling. Indeed the whole conduct of Warburton in relation to Bentley is remarkable. He had not any cause of offence against him; nor did he, like his friend the poet, regard the race of critics with aversion: on the contrary, no one more fully appreciated the value of criticism, or better estimated the learning and genius of Bentley³². His literary ambition, however, which took aim at the highest objects, had led him to exert uncommon pains in his 'Divine Legation of Moses,' to controvert Bentley's positions respecting the laws attributed to Zaleucus and Charondas, maintained in the dissertation on Phalaris. Of all the antagonists of our critic, Warburton was most worthy to be matched in such a combat: both his reading and his logical powers admitted a comparison with those of

Warburton's conduct in respect to Bentley.

³² Warburton, writing advice to Mr. W. Greene, in 1738, on a course of studies, directs him to the study of the best critics, such as Jos. Scaliger, Casaubon, Lipsius, Turnebus, &c.; "but, above all, Dr. Bentley and Bishop Hare, *who are the greatest men in this way that ever were.*"

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

Bentley; and had they been more nearly of an age, it is probable that the world would have seen the powers of both called out in a controversy. But Warburton's classical education not having been regular, his learning was neither so sound nor so secure as that seen in the dissertation on Phalaris; and there is much justice in the well-known remark attributed to Bentley, on reading the 'Divine Legation,' that the author had a voracious appetite for knowledge, but he doubted whether he had a good digestion. Although he treats the veteran scholar with the respect due to his merits and character, yet it is easy to discover from this and other parts of his great work, that he was jealous of his fame, and proposed himself as his rival. In the second part of the 'Divine Legation,' Warburton's reply to Collins' book 'On the Grounds of the Christian Religion,' plainly emulates the celebrated answer of Phileleutherus to his 'Discourse of Freethinking'³³. In some places there may, I think, be discovered a spirit of detraction, and a desire to degrade Bentley in estimation³⁴. Whether it is to be attributed to this cause, or a wish to gratify the spleen of his friend Pope, that he condescended to turn his style into ridicule, in neither case is the fact creditable to his own character. It is more satisfactory to remark that Warburton shows an anxiety to make some amends by the introduction of a note on another part of Pope's works, in his edition published after the poet's death, in which he expresses a wish 'to do that justice to

³³ *Divine Legation*. B. VI. Section 6.

³⁴ Particularly in the long note on the *Divine Legation*, B. II. Section 3, in which he labours to convict Bentley of want of veracity relative to his alleged plagiarism from Vizzanius in his *Dissert. on Phal.* p. 54. But he does not make out his case in a way which can satisfy any liberal mind in admitting such a charge. The subject has been already mentioned in Vol. I. p. 105.

Bentley, which he never met with while alive³⁵.' In the same spirit, in a letter to his friend Hurd, he declares himself ' charmed with the latter's generous concern for the character of a truly great and much injured man, Dr. Bentley³⁶.' " CHAP.
XX.
1742.

Shortly before Bentley's death, justice was publicly done to a very remarkable instance of his critical sagacity, and intimate acquaintance with the Greek language. Chishull had inserted in his *Antiquitates Asiaticæ* an inscription taken from an ancient marble, which had belonged to the temple of Jupiter Urius in the Bosphorus, at the entrance of the Euxine sea. This had been separately copied long before by the two travellers, Wheeler and Spon; and Chishull printed the eight elegiac lines of which it consisted in a somewhat corrected form: hereupon Bentley wrote a criticism, restoring them according to his own judgment, as he imagined they must have been intended by the author, and supposing the errors to have proceeded from the two travellers by whom they were copied. These remarks being sent in a letter, probably addressed to his friend Dr. Mead, were communicated, without the author's name, to Chishull; who replied in two letters, partly approving and partly rejecting as inadmissible, the corrections of the anonymous critic. It must be allowed to have been no common instance of boldness, to dispute the testimony, separately given, of two learned eye-witnesses. But not long afterwards the marble itself was brought to England; and, improbable as such a thing might

Singular
proof of
Bentley's
sagacity in
correcting a
Greek in-
scription.

1729.

1731.

³⁵ Pope's imitation of Horace's *Epist. to August.* V. 104. In another part of his Commentary on Pope's works, Warburton applies to Bentley the following quotation from Cicero: " Habuit a natura genus quoddam acuminis, quod etiam arte limaverat, quod erat in reprehendendis verbis versutum et solers; sed sæpe stomachosum, nonnunquam frigidum, interdum etiam facetum."

³⁶ *Letters from a late eminent Prelate to one of his Friends*, 8vo. p. 9.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

appear, every word of the inscription, when examined, turned out to be literally and exactly as Bentley had conjectured that it ought to be read. John Taylor was at this time publishing a Latin Thesis, which he had delivered in the Law-Schools when keeping his Act: by way of appendix to this essay, he transcribed and printed a *fac-simile* of the inscription itself, along with Bentley's Letter and Chishull's reply, copies of which had been given to him by the veteran critic, whose sagacity he had thus the satisfaction of displaying by such a signal example³⁷. In the same publication Taylor inserted another letter of Bentley's, written in 1735, and containing a specimen of his accuracy in a different way: it was the explanation of the date of a Persic manuscript just given to the Public Library, showing that the term *Yonane* 1504, implied that year of the æra of the Seleucidæ, corresponding with A.D. 1193; *Yonane* or *Iouanan* being the name by which the Eastern nations called the people of the Greek Empire under the successors of Alexander.

My narrative has now reached its last stage; and no more remains but to relate the termination of Bentley's mortal career. He used in his old age to compare himself with 'an old trunk, which, if you let it alone, will last a long time; but if you jumble it by moving, will soon fall to pieces³⁸.' Tradition in Cambridge has recorded that he said, he thought himself likely to live to fourscore, an age long enough to read every thing which was worth reading; adding in his peculiar manner,

Et tunc magna mei sub terris ibit imago.

³⁷ *Commentarius ad Legem Decemviralem de inope Debitore in partes dissecando: quem in Scholis Juridicis Cantabrigiæ, Junii xxii. 1741, recitavit JOANNES TAYLOR, LL.D.*

³⁸ Markland's Letter to Bowyer. *Nichols' Lit. Anec.* vol. iv. p. 351.

In January 1742 he completed his eightieth year : in June, I find that his health and spirits enabled him to officiate as examiner and elector to Lord Craven's two University Scholarships³⁹. About a month afterwards he was seized with a complaint which is said to have been a pleuritic fever. He himself suggested that his case required bleeding ; but Dr. Heberden, who was then a young physician practising at Cambridge, would not venture upon that remedy. The illness appearing serious, his family sent to Stamford for Dr. Wallis, who lost no time in going to Cambridge to visit his venerable friend : but before his arrival, Dr. Bentley was no more. He expired on the 14th of July. Dr. Wallis is stated to have expressed much regret that the patient's own suggestion had not been complied with.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

June 10.
Bentley's
last illness.
July.

His death.

His remains were interred on the north side of the communion-rails of the College chapel ; after the ceremony, a funeral oration in Latin was spoken in commendation of the deceased, by Mr. Philip Yonge, one of the College tutors, who became shortly afterwards Public Orator, and in process of time Bishop of Norwich⁴⁰. A small square stone in the pavement

Funeral.

³⁹ The Scholars elected were John Hardy Craven, and Christopher Smart. From a memorandum in the Registry's Office, it appears that the former was chosen solely on account of his name, in compliance with a clause in the founder's will. A strong protest was entered by Taylor, the Greek Professor, against his election, upon the ground of his insufficiency in learning.

⁴⁰ It happened that on the day of Bentley's funeral, the celebrated physician, Sir George Baker, first went from Eton to be admitted a scholar of King's College. The reputation for scholarship which he brought with him was so high, that a prognostication of his future fame was expressed by this quotation :

*uno avulso, non deficit alter
Aureus, et simili frondescit virga metallo.*

The prediction may be said to have been verified, though not in the instance of Baker himself, yet in that of an *élève* of his, whom his liberality

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

comprises the only memorial of Dr. Bentley; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that the inscription on this stone withholds from him his title of Master of the College. This omission obviously proceeded from that part of the Fellows, who contended that after the Visitor's sentence of deprivation, he had ceased to be their legitimate Head; and I infer from it a probability, that Colbatch's party happened at that moment to be sufficiently strong to make the suppression of his title a condition of the interment taking place in the chapel with the usual honours⁴¹. The feelings resulting from the late feuds will account for no monument being erected to the memory of this illustrious character.

Disposition
of his prop-
erty.

The particulars of the Doctor's will do not enable us to ascertain the extent of his property. He bequeathed 500*l.* to each of his daughters, and 500*l.* to each of Mrs. Cumberland's four children; his property in Bank-stock to his son Richard Bentley, and the residue of his effects to be divided equally between his son and two daughters: but what was the amount of the Bank-stock is not specified. From information which I have gathered from connections of his family, I apprehend that Dr. Bentley, although accused by his enemies of amassing money almost all his life, was really able to leave but a very moderate provision for his family. Although he had several pieces of preferment, yet the amount of the whole did not, I think, exceed 1300*l.* or 1400*l.* a year, at the utmost. His

enabled to go to the University of Cambridge—*Richard Porson*, the person who, of all scholars subsequent to Bentley, can best be compared with his great model.

⁴¹ The following is the inscription on the stone:

H. S. E.
RICHARDUS BENTLEY, S. T. P. R.
Obiit xiv Jul. 1742.
Ætatis 80.

son, who was brought up to no profession, had occasioned him considerable expense. Upon the whole, I doubt whether the savings of his long life were more than five thousand pounds.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

The most valuable bequest of Bentley was that of his library and papers; the whole of these (except some old Greek Manuscripts brought from Mount Athos, which he left to the College) he made the property of his nephew, Richard, the sole executor of his will; probably expecting that he would give to the world his edition of the New Testament, and others of his unpublished lucubrations. But this gentleman never edited any posthumous works of his uncle; and returned the money of the subscribers to the New Testament. Part of the books were sold immediately, the possessor not having a house large enough to contain the whole; the remainder continued in his parsonage at Nailstone, in Leicestershire, till his death in 1786⁴², when they also were sold by auction: but with one important exception. The whole of Bentley's manuscripts and critical apparatus for his edition of the New Testament, his corrected copy of Homer, and copy-book of manuscript notes, his Hesychius, and Hephæstion, were bequeathed by Doctor Richard to Trinity College, of which he continued a Fellow till his death. He had many years before given a valuable portion of his uncle's classical books, bearing his marginal notes, along with his literary correspondence, to Mr. Cumberland, the well-known dramatist and poet, by whom the papers were transferred to Trinity College, and the volumes sold to Lackington the bookseller: by the public spirit and right feeling of the latter, his entire purchase be-

His library
and papers.

⁴² The account of Dr. Richard Bentley, given in the obituary of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1786, p. 268, confounds him with his cousin, Dr. Thomas Bentley, who had been dead forty-four years.

CHAP. came the property of the British Museum, and, as I
XX. have understood, without any advance of price.
1742.

After Dr. Bentley's death, his eldest daughter, Mrs. Ridge, married the Rev. James Favell, a Fellow of Trinity College, of high character, and an admired preacher in the University pulpit. Mr. Cumberland, his other son-in-law, became in process of time the Bishop of Kilmore. His son, Richard Bentley, is well known to fame both by his writings, and his intimacy with Bubb Dodington, Horace Walpole, and Gray. All his contemporaries agree in acknowledging the extent of his genius, and in lamenting that his pursuits were so desultory and various, as to preclude him from obtaining in any line that eminence which his talents qualified him to reach.

Remarks on
the personal
character of
Dr. Bentley.

It may be expected of a biographer that he should at the end of his work give a careful and well-balanced summary of his hero's character. But this is a task which I must confess my disinclination to undertake. Having spared no pains in collecting every particular which I could discover respecting the conduct and opinions of Dr. Bentley, and in comparing and weighing different representations of them; and having carefully and impartially communicated the results to my readers, I have enabled them to form as just an estimate as I can myself do, of the character of that extraordinary personage. Were I now to sum up my own opinions of his mind, his principles, disposition, and talents, it would be presumptuous to expect that they should coincide in all respects with those of a reader who has accompanied me throughout my narrative. But I have another reason for my unwillingness to descant further upon the particulars of Bentley's character: it appears to me that his passions were not always under the controul, nor his actions

under the guidance, of Christian principles ; that, in consequence, pride and ambition, the faults to which his nature was most exposed, were suffered to riot without restraint ; and that hence proceeded the display of arrogance, selfishness, obstinacy, and oppression, by which it must be confessed that his career was disfigured. That nature however had not denied to him certain amiable qualities of the heart, and that he possessed in a considerable degree many of the social and endearing virtues, is proved beyond a doubt by the warm and steady affection with which he was regarded by his family and his intimate friends.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

Upon Bentley's literary character I have already made frequent observations, which it would be superfluous to repeat. It is now sufficient to remark, that his merits have been universally acknowledged by subsequent scholars, both in this country and on the continent : the disposition to censure the faults of his writings, which we have so frequently observed, appeared to cease with his life ; and the learned of all countries have joined in assigning to him the title of Prince of Scholars. Not that they have been blind to the errors of his criticism, particularly his unnecessary and tasteless alterations in Latin poetry ; but they have discovered and acknowledged the signal benefit of his productions, in the information which they convey, and the exercise which they supply to the judgment.

His literary
merits.

The reader of the foregoing Memoirs will have observed, how greatly the literary career of Dr. Bentley was affected and influenced by the extraordinary complexion of his personal history : no one can fail to regret that so large a portion of his time should have been worse than wasted in unseemly contests, or to remark that, however great and du-

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

erable the reputation which he has actually achieved, his literary performances might have been still more honourable to himself, and more beneficial to the public, had he not been occupied in an incessant struggle to retain his rank and preferment. But, putting this consideration aside, I am disposed to think that he did not correctly understand the nature of his own qualifications, and that his powers were not always exerted in the field where they were most capable of benefiting the world. At the time of composing the most learned of his works, the enlarged Dissertation on Phalaris, Bentley was in his thirty-eighth year; and although he continued his literary labours to more than double that age, yet he never produced any thing equal or similar to that admirable piece. His Remarks on Freethinking, although a hasty composition, serve as a specimen of the powerful effect which he could produce, when he brought the energies of his mind and stores of his erudition to serve in the maintenance of truth, and refutation of sophistry. In such a line he would, I conceive, have exercised his learning, acuteness, and powers of application, with far more benefit to mankind, than in that conjectural criticism, which should have been the sport and amusement, rather than the serious and staple occupation of a genius like Bentley's. In this favourite pursuit he displayed his ingenuity and quickness, often at the expense of sound judgment and correct taste; and his learning was too much employed in defending his fanciful alterations of the text of a Latin poet, when it ought to have been devoted to maintain and illustrate truth. Notwithstanding this frequent abuse of his erudition, such is the power of genius, and so great the preponderance of his solid and unshaken merits, that Bentley has established a school of criticism, of which

the greatest scholars since his time have been proud to consider themselves members ; and, in spite of the envy and opposition of his contemporaries, has attained a more exalted reputation than has hitherto been the lot of any one in the department of ancient literature.

CHAP.
XX.
1742.

CHAP.
XX.

IT is not improbable that some readers, who have felt an interest in the particulars about Trinity College unavoidably connected with my narrative, may wish for a little information respecting the subsequent history of that Society, and the steps by which it rose to its present eminence. Having given in the seventh Chapter a brief account of the College previous to the mastership of Dr. Bentley, I will here annex an outline of such later occurrences as are most worthy of record.

Dr. Robert Smith, the relative and successor of Cotes, became Master upon Bentley's death. He had been a partizan of his predecessor in the recent feuds; nevertheless, he seems by his equitable and judicious conduct to have healed all wounds, and conciliated all parties. The peace of the College was, however, sometimes disturbed by the violent temper and eccentric conduct of Dr. Parne. This gentleman officiated as deputy to Dr. Whaley, (who succeeded Bentley as Regius Professor of Divinity) and is said to have acquitted himself in the Schools with much ability and a graceful manner. But in the meantime he became embarrassed with debts, probably resulting from his tutorship; and the agitation of such circumstances operating on a mind which seems always to have been in a high degree of excitement, produced unequivocal symptoms of insanity; whereupon he was exiled from the College with an allowance for his support. Just at that time
1749. the death of Dr. Colbatch occasioned the revival of those proceedings, to which he had devoted so large

a portion of his life ; and a fresh attempt was made to ascertain the Visitor of Trinity College. The rectory of Orwell was taken by Dr. Vernon, who already possessed the living of St. George's Bloomsbury : the statutes ordain, that no one shall hold two livings along with his fellowship ; but as St. George's was one of the churches recently built, and therefore not in the King's books, Vernon contended that it ought not to be regarded as a benefice contemplated by the statutes. The Master and Seniors holding a different opinion declared his fellowship vacant, and he immediately appealed against their decision to the Bishop of Ely as Visitor. Dr. Gooch, the Master of Caius College, who had performed so conspicuous a part in Bentley's history, then occupied the see of Ely ; but he, warned by the example of his predecessors, was not forward to interpose in the affairs of Trinity College ; and the Court of King's Bench was moved to compel him by a mandamus to discharge the office of Visitor. The Master and a majority of the Seniors, having been of Bentley's party in the former disputes, adopted his view of the question, and resolved to maintain that the King alone possessed that authority. The action which ensued bears a close resemblance to the last that we detailed, in 1738 : on this occasion however the Court directed that the Attorney-General, Sir Dudley Ryder, should be heard on behalf of the rights of the Crown. This action concluded, like the last, with determining nothing : Chief Justice Lee pronounced that the question, in whom the visitatorial power existed, was not to be settled by the Court, but ought to be decided by a jury. Parne, who being incensed against his brethren, had joined with Vernon in this action, died shortly after its termination. Thus ended the litigations which

CHAP.
XX.

had agitated the College with little intermission for above forty years : at the close of that long term the question was left in exactly the same state of uncertainty as at the beginning. I am not aware of any subsequent attempts made to litigate the point : the Society, seemingly in despair of ever obtaining a decision from the law, settled it among themselves ; and all personal feelings having subsided, the members have ever since acquiesced in what happened to be the sense of the majority when it was last under discussion, and have regarded the Crown as Visitor of the College. In the few and trifling cases of appeal which have since occurred, justice has been administered promptly and without difficulty, by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of the Sovereign.

From that time the College was enabled to pursue undisturbed the main objects of its institution, the education of youth, and the cultivation of philosophy, literature, and religion. Its advance in reputation corresponded with the spirit of industry and study which, when not interrupted by domestic jars, became again the pervading principle of the society. In the meantime its revenues, under the judicious management of Mr. Stephen Whisson, who continued bursar for about thirty years, not only recovered from the embarrassment occasioned by the defence of Dr. Bentley, but improved the incomes of the Fellows, rebuilt part of the fabric, and, what was an object of at least equal importance, enabled the Society to give considerable sums towards the augmentation of their small vicarages. It has been mentioned in our memoirs of Dr. Bentley, how much the state of the College preferment was to be regretted, and what a judicious plan he had meditated for bettering its condition. This was effected, in part, about forty years ago, by a Royal Letter, enjoining that the College

livings (except five or six in the neighbourhood of Cambridge) should in future be offered to the Fellows, not to hold as before with College-preacher-ships, but upon condition of vacating their fellowships. Of the prospective benefit of this regulation to the College there could be no doubt: but it was equally certain that the immediate views of many of the existing Society, who were in the expectancy of livings, must thereby be prejudiced: it deserves therefore to be recorded as an instance of the triumph of public spirit over private interest, that the resolution to solicit this order was carried, not by a majority only, but by the express consent and approbation, individually given, of every one of the sixty Fellows.

The custom which had been introduced by Dr. Bentley of private examinations for fellowships and scholarships, was attended with much inconvenience. The various examiners formed their opinions of the candidates' merits upon different *data*; too much latitude was given to the private taste of individuals in the choice of subjects for examination; in some hands the enquiry might be slight and superficial, in others altogether neglected: a door was thus opened to abuse, and confidence was diminished in the justice of the decisions. Some instances having occurred of Seniors taking a part in the elections, who had never examined the candidates, a strong memorial was presented to the Seniority by ten of the junior Fellows, remonstrating against a practice which was in opposition to the statutes, and tended to destroy the objects of the foundation ⁴³. The matter of this remonstrance

1786.

⁴³ The effects which have flowed from this Memorial have been so singularly beneficial to the College and the public, that the names of the ten memorialists deserve to be placed upon record: they were, *George Waddington, John Baynes, Thomas Cautley, Miles Popple, Thomas Jones, Henry Porter, Kingsman Baskett, John Hailstone, Matthew Murfitt, and Matthew Wilson.*

CHAP.
XX.

was unexceptionable ; but the governing part of the Society, offended at what could not be denied to be a censure of themselves, and regarding it as an act of insubordination on the part of their juniors, after an ineffectual attempt to induce some of the memorialists to withdraw their names, pronounced an admonition, cautioning them to behave with more deference to their superiors. The object of the memorial was however immediately effected : the Master, Dr. Hinchliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, insisted on each of the electors becoming *bona fide* an examiner : and upon 1789. his resignation about two years afterwards, Dr. Postlethwaite, who succeeded, instituted the present system of public examination, in which the merits of the candidates are fully and fairly tried in the different 1790. branches of academical study. Under the auspices of the same Master the annual examinations of the students of the College were established⁴⁴. The wonderful effects of these institutions in exciting industry and emulation among the young men, and exalting the character of the College, are such as must have even surpassed the hopes of their promoters. It was not till this system came into full operation, that Trinity College could be said to have resumed the station which it originally held among the establishments of this kingdom. Since that period its history is comprised in the record of academical rewards adjudged to its students, and of the distinctions which they have subsequently obtained in the 1823. different professions, in the paths of learning and science, and in the great theatre of public life. The only particular incident to be noticed in the later

⁴⁴ The examinations then instituted were for Undergraduates of the first two years. A plan for a similar examination of the third year was adopted by the Master and Seniors in 1818, at the instance of the writer of this book, who at that time filled the office of Head Lecturer.

annals of the College, is the addition of a new and handsome quadrangle, erected principally through the exertions of Dr. Wordsworth the present Master, which accommodates more than an hundred students. But the benefits, like those of other public spirited measures, have extended much beyond their immediate object. The example was hereby set to other Colleges, and has been promptly followed, of enlarging their buildings for the reception of an increased number of students, and extending the advantages of education in an English University to a larger proportion of the liberal classes of society.

CHAP.
XX.

APPENDIX.

DR. BENTLEY'S DEFENSIVE PLEA.—JUNE 23, 1733.

See Vol. II. p. 337.

1. WHEREAS it is alleged in the sixth article of the pretended articles, exhibited and objected to the said Dr. Bentley, to the effect following, to wit, 'That by the second chapter of the statutes of Trinity College, it is amongst other things ordained and provided, that the Master of the said College for the time being, shall be a person no less eminent above other members of the said College in his piety and integrity of life, than he is superior to them in the dignity of his place, notwithstanding which, he, the said Richard Bentley, hath for more than twenty years past, in violation of the said statute, lived a very irreligious life, and notoriously neglected the public worship of God:' It is therein alleged falsely and untruly, and the truth was and is, that the said Dr. Bentley always was and is a devout, pious, and religious man, and was always accounted, reputed, and esteemed so to be, and this was and is true; and so much the said Robert Johnson hath heard and doth know and believe in his conscience to be true, and the party propo-
nent doth allege and propound every thing jointly and severally.

2. And whereas it is also alleged in the said sixth article, of the said articles, that the said Dr. Bentley, for more than twenty years last past, preceding the time of exhibiting the said articles, did notoriously neglect the public worship of God, and particularly by constantly and habitually absenting him-

APPEND. self from divine service in the chapel of the said College, at the usual hours of morning and evening prayers: It is therein alleged falsely and untruly, and the truth was and is, that the said Dr. Bentley, from the time of his being made Master of the College, and until he was about fifty years of age, which was about the year 1709, the said Dr. Bentley constantly attended morning and evening prayers in the chapel, and that from that time the infirmity of his constitution prevented his attending morning prayers, when at five or six o'clock in the morning, but he always attended when morning prayers were later at the times of celebrating the sacrament: That from 1709 he constantly attended evening prayers in summer, till he was about sixty years of age, which was about the year 1718 or 1719. That about that time the infirmity of his age and a tenderness contracted by his sedentary and studious life prevented his being so constant at evening prayers as he before had been. But the said Doctor, from about the said year 1718 to 1725 or 1726, was frequently at evening prayers, and at the celebration of the sacrament always when his health permitted. That from about the year 1718, when his age and the tenderness contracted as aforesaid, subjected him to almost constant colds and dangerous coughs by changing his habit and putting on a collegiate or academic one, yet he was so unwilling to be prevented attending chapel so constantly as he before had done, that in order to enable himself to stay in that spacious chapel, and to secure him from the cold and damp of the marble, the necessary time of prayers and administering the sacrament, he had a carpet carried by his servant to chapel for that purpose; but as his age and tenderness increased, and all means he could use proving ineffectual to prevent his indisposition, which he almost constantly contracted by being in so spacious a room in his collegiate or academic habit, about the year 1725 or 1726, two or three years before the said articles were exhibited, he was necessitated to decline going thither, or to any other place out of his own house, by advice of his physicians. And this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

3. That accordingly from that time the said Dr. Bentley hath not, by reason of his tenderness and indisposition, gone out of his own house to visit any one Fellow of his own Society, or any one acquaintance in the University, nor once been in

the College-hall, even at any public festival, though it adjoins to his own apartments. That from that time also, he being the King's Professor in Divinity, he has been forced to obtain a deputy at his own annual and considerable expense, to preside in his stead at disputations. That since that time, when his present Majesty did the University the honour of a visit, it being the duty of the King's Professor in Divinity to receive him with a Latin oration in the University Schools, he, the said Doctor, performing the said exercise in person, did thereby get such an illness that he was for several days very dangerously ill, and accounted by his physicians as a dying man, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

APPEND.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

4. That during all the time the said Dr. Bentley hath been Master of the said College, there have been every year at least the number necessarily required by statute, and generally more, College preachers in his time, than there were in his predecessor's time for the like number of years, as appears by the College books and appointments of College preachers, to which the party proponent refers himself, and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

5. That the Catechetical Lectures being by statute appointed only in order for the College preachers to be more commodiously chosen out of them, and there having never been a defective number of College preachers, there was not any necessity of appointing Catechetical Lecturers in order to choose College Preachers. But, however, there have been three times as many in the said Dr. Bentley's time, as there were in the same number of years in his immediate predecessor's time, as appears by the usual appointments of lecturers, and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

6. That it does appear by the College books, to which the party proponent refers himself, that Mr. Malled, who is alleged in the twelfth and thirteenth articles to have been refused to be put up to catechise in the year 1719, was actually put up for that purpose on the 4th of June, 1716, and so continued in 1719; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

7. That Dr. Bentley was not present at, or any way privy to, the putting the seal to the instrument mentioned in the

APPEND. twenty-ninth article of the said articles objected to the said Dr. Bentley. But the same was put in his absence by the Vice-master, after a meeting duly summoned, and agreed to be put by a majority of the sixteen seniors; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

8. That by the statutes as well as the usage of the College, the seal is not required to be put to any instruments in the presence of the sixteen seniors in College. For that by the said usage and statutes, the sixteen seniors in College are to be duly summoned, and if a majority of the said sixteen seniors agree to the putting of the seal, with the consent of the Master, or in his absence the Vice-master, the same is to be put accordingly. But in case any of the sixteen seniors in College shall not appear at the said meeting, the next senior Fellow in College in course, is to supply the vacancy; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

9. That it doth not appear by any of the College books that the seniors going out of College, have deputed any persons to act for them, or that ever any such deputations were made. But all College acts have been done at meetings composed of the proper seniors, and the next immediate seniors resident in College, without any deputation from the absent seniors; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

10. That the meetings to transact the College affairs are appointed by the Master, or Vice-master, and the seniors are thereto always summoned, according as they appear in seniority resident in the College Books. And the said Dr. Bentley hath not at any time given orders for summoning any persons in particular, but only in general to summon the seniors in the same manner as hath been always customary; and upon the 9th day of August, 1728, the sixteen seniors resident in College were duly summoned for the meeting upon the day following, being the 10th day of August, the day mentioned in the thirtieth article of the said articles. That sixteen Fellows duly assembled, of whom were the fifteen proper seniors then resident in College; that Mr. Myers, who was the sixteenth proper senior then resident, and who had been duly summoned, but not attending, the next Fellow in seniority

to him was summoned, and did assemble on the said 10th day of August, and the seal was put to the petition mentioned in the said article, by the direction of thirteen, or at least twelve, of the said sixteen so assembled; and that no juniors were purposely sent for, nor were any Fellows at that time resident in College absent from the said meeting who were of longer standing than any of those present, except Mr. Myers, as aforesaid; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

APPEND.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

11. That the Promoter himself being one of the sixteen so assembled, was so far conscious that the said assembly was regular, that though he, together with Dr. Colbatch, the Casuistical Professor, and Mr. Thomas Parne, two other Fellows of the said College, assembled on that occasion, did on that day draw up and deliver a protest in writing against the setting the seal to the said petition, yet he or they did not in the said protest even suggest that the said assembly had not been duly summoned, or that there were not sixteen assembled, or that the said sixteen were not the proper seniors resident in College; the said protest being founded wholly on the subject-matter of the instrument tendered to be sealed, and not on any irregularity of the said assembly, either as to the manner of summoning them, the impropriety of persons assembled, or the defect of the sufficient number; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

12. In supply of proof of the preceding article, the party proponent doth exhibit and hereunto annex the said original protest, and doth allege that the same is subscribed by and with the proper hand-writing of the said Dr. Colbatch, Mr. Parne, and the said Robert Johnson, the Promoter in this cause; and so much was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

13. That the close, or piece of inclosed ground, in the parish of Kirby Kendal, in the thirty-eighth article mentioned, was copyhold of inheritance, and held by — Copland, of and from the said College, who were lords of the manor the same was held of, under a quit-rent of four shillings a year, and other duties and services. That the said Copland did, in 1708, mortgage the same to Mr. Robert Shepheard, of Natland, in Westmoreland, and Mr. William Wilson, of Kirkland, in the said county, for the sum of 34*l.*; that soon after the said

APPEND. Copland was convicted of felony, and was executed for the same, whereby the said piece of ground escheated to the said College, as lords of the said manor, subject to the said mortgage. That the charge of conviction of the said Copland amounted to ten pounds, and the said Copland leaving a wife and several small children, the neighbouring gentlemen and justices of the Peace petitioned the College not to take advantage of the said escheat, in compassion to the poverty of the said widow and family; that the said College, finding the annual value of the said piece of ground to be 3*l.* a year, agreed to re-grant out the same to Mr. Josiah Lambert, he paying for the same 64*l.* out of which 44*l.* 15*s.* was to be deducted for the said mortgage and charge of conviction, and of the remaining, 19*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.* 5*s.* was given by the College as an act of charity to the said widow, and books were bought into the College Library with the remaining sum of 10*l.*; and this was and is true, and so much does appear by the College books, and an agreement of the Master and Seniors assembled together in 1712, in order to regrant the same; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bentley's
Defensive Plea.

14. That the said piece of ground is not alienated for ever, nor by the deeds of conveyance purported to be so; but the same was only regranted out by the College to the said Josiah Lambert for life, only to be held of the said College at their will, under the same rents, dues, duties, and services, which the said — Copland held the same by, as by the said original deed remaining in the said College will appear, and which, as lords of the said manor, they were enabled to do, in order to preserve and support their manor; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

15. That when the said Dr. Bentley was made Master, the Master's lodge was in a very ruinous condition, little or nothing having been done towards repairing of it from the year 1640; and towards the repairs of the said lodge the said Dr. Bentley gave out of his own proper money, in the year 1700, the sum of 100*l.* sterling; and in the same year, the said lodge being a considerable part of the fabric of the College, the Master and the eight Seniors finding the same to be much out of repair, unanimously agreed and ordered that the said lodge should be

repaired, and finished, with new ceiling, wainscot, flooring, and other convenient improvements, which by the said statutes of the said College they have the power to do; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

APPEND.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

16. That in pursuance of the said order, now remaining in the College books, the same was repaired and fitted up with convenient improvements, which did amount to the sum of 1171*l*. and no more, which was necessary to be laid out thereon, and that the several sums of money which have been at any time laid out on the said lodge, and improvements of it, were ordered and approved of by the Master and Senior Fellows of the said College; and that the rest of the said fabric hath had as much laid out in repairing the same in Dr. Bentley's time as the lodge hath had in proportion; and the said lodge is not in better condition, or better fitted up, than the lodges of several other Masters in the said University, though it is the residence of the Royal Family when they honour the University with their presence, as also of the Lords the Judges in their circuits; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

17. That about the year 1718, or 1719, the said Dr. Bentley's infirmities and indispositions requiring a milk diet, and there being two pieces of ground belonging and near to the said College, in which the Senior Fellows had a right to turn their horses, and which were not of the yearly value of twenty shillings, he, the said Dr. Bentley, did apply to the said Seniors to hire the same of them, in order to keep a cow or two, at the yearly rent of two guineas, which the said Seniors let him have in the year 1720, at the said rent, by an order of the College for that purpose; and the same were not then, or at any other time, seized by him, as is falsely alleged in the fifty-second article exhibited against him; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

18. That the College being exempted from paying the duty of excise for beer brewed in their own brewhouse for their own use, and there being an old pigeon-house, with a lumber-room adjoining, belonging to the College, the same were fitted up by the approbation of the Seniors, for a place to lay the College stores, or grain in, when they should have occasion; but the said Dr. Bentley did not convert the said two edifices, or

APPEND. any other edifices, into a large spacious granary, at the expence of 400*l.* or any other sum, for his own private use, to carry on the trade of a farmer, or maltster, as is falsely alleged in the said fifty-second article, which trade he never at any time used or followed, or ever used the said edifices or granary for his own use, or for any such like purpose; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

19. That whereas it is alleged in the said fifty-second article exhibited against the said Dr. Bentley, that the said Dr. Bentley hath, since the year 1715 or 1716, exorbitantly and unnecessarily laid out 2000*l.* of the College stock on his lodge, garden, and other buildings, which in the said article are mentioned, it is therein alleged, falsely and untruly; and the truth was and is, that the sum of money laid out thereon did amount to 911*l.* and not more. And that in October, 1717, when his late Majesty, King George the First, designed to honour the University with his presence, some of his Majesty's surveyors being sent before to view the presence-room, called 'Henry the Eighth's Chamber,' and other rooms for his Majesty's entertainment, at the said Dr. Bentley's lodge, the walls of the said chambers were found so decayed and weak, that they were then ordered to be underpropped and shored up for his Majesty's security during his stay there, and were thereupon pulled down and rebuilt, and a considerable part of the said 911*l.* were laid out in the same, and the rest thereof in the other buildings belonging to the College, and the whole sum was paid by order of the Seniors of the said College; and the party proponent doth allege that the other buildings mentioned in the said fifty-second article, and pretended to have been built for the use of the Master, in the back side of the said College, were not built for the use of the Master, as is falsely alleged in the said article, but for the use and conveniency of the Fellows of the said College; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

20. That whereas it is alleged in the said fifty-second article that Dr. Bentley had made himself a bath in his garden, and caused it to be supplied with water and other conveniences for bathing, the party proponent doth allege that there was a fountain near the place where the said bath now is, when the said Dr. Bentley first came to be Master of the said College, and

that the pipe which had for a century or two before supplied the same with water, was only lengthened by an addition of two feet of lead to supply the cistern of the said bath, and that there is no other summer-house in the said garden save the said bath; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

APPEND.
Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

21. And whereas it is alleged in the fifty-third article, that Dr. Bentley built a fine new country house upon part of the College estate at Over, for the use of himself and family, fit for the reception of a person of rank and quality, which cost eight hundred pounds of the College money, though not then finished or furnished; it is therein alleged falsely and untruly, and the truth was and is, that the College being endowed with the great tithes of the parish of Over, and the glebe land belonging to the said rectory and the parsonage-house being fallen to decay, by a former tenant running out his lease, it was agreed by the Master and Senior Fellows of the said College, to rebuild the said parsonage-house, which was done accordingly; that as the vicarage of the said parish is in the gift of the said College, and the vicar has no house to live in, and the profits of the said vicarage are exceedingly small, it was thought proper to rebuild the said house, so that it might not be inconvenient to the tenant or lessee of the rectory to let the vicar for the time being have two rooms or a floor for his use when necessary; that when the said house was rebuilt it was in lease to a tenant, and was so at the time the said articles were exhibited; that it was not built by Dr. Bentley for the use of himself or family, that neither the said Doctor nor any of his family ever lived there, nor was any of his family ever there, or the Doctor himself, save only once when he went with the Seniors, to view the said estate; that the said place is so far from being fit for the reception of a person of rank and quality, or for the residence of any person who can live elsewhere, that it is situate in the worst, the most dirty and unhealthful part of Cambridgeshire, on the brink of the great level of the Fen, and worse supplied with conveniences of life than any village in the said county; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

22. That whereas it is alleged in the fifty-seventh article, that there is not any allowance by any of the statutes to the Master of the College for bread, beer, fuel, or other provisions

APPEND. for himself and family at home, yet, notwithstanding, that he hath consumed great quantities of the stores of the College to the amount of several hundred pounds a year; the party proponent doth allege that the said Dr. Bentley hath never since he was Master of the said College received so much of the stock or stores of the College, or any other profits whatsoever from it, as by the statutes of the said College he is entitled to, due allowance being made for the decrease of the value of money, from the time when the statutes were given to the time of exhibiting the said articles; the Master of the said College having an allowance, by the 43d chapter of the said statutes, of 104*l.* a year for stipend and commons or provisions, and 4*l.* a year for livery, besides three servants and three horses to be kept and maintained at the College expense for his use; and by the 22d chapter of the said statutes, no deduction is to be made from his allowance for commons or provisions at such times as he shall be absent from the said College, as by the said 43d and 22d chapters of the said statutes, reference being thereunto had, may more fully appear; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

23. That whereas it is alleged in the said fifty-seventh article, that the said Dr. Bentley hath consumed in bread, beer, and meal, one hundred and fifty pounds a year, it is therein alleged falsely and untruly, and the truth was and is, that he has not consumed in bread, beer, or meal a hundred pounds a year; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

24. That whereas it is likewise alleged in the fifty-eighth article, that Dr. Bentley, in the last year before the said articles were exhibited, spent of the College stock in linen and pewter ninety pounds, as will appear by the said College books; it is therein untruly alleged, and the truth was and is, that the said Dr. Bentley had allowed him only in the said books thirty-five pounds three shillings and eight pence half-penny, as by the said books will appear; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

25. That some of the Fellows of the College having in the year 1711 and afterwards, employed Mr. Serjeant Miller in carrying on their contests in relation to some collegiate rights claimed by them before the Right Reverend Bishop Moore,

the then Lord Bishop of Ely; and in carrying on a pre-APPEND.
tended prosecution against the said Dr. Bentley, before the
said Lord Bishop of Ely, and afterwards on the said Bishop
Moore's death, a petition or two to his late Majesty in
Council, and his said late Majesty or his Privy Council not
proceeding therein, and the said Mr. Miller being urgent on
some of the Fellows for the expence he had been at on
their account, it was in 1719, by some of the said Fel-
lows mentioned to the said Dr. Bentley, that it might pro-
bably be the opinion of his said late Majesty and his Honour-
able Privy Council, that the matters in difference should be
ended and accommodated by themselves, and the said Dr.
Bentley was desired by the said Fellows to take the opinion of
some of the King's learned counsel on a question to the fol-
lowing effect: whether, as the said contest carried on before
Bishop Moore had been concerning some collegiate rights,
concerning which the Fellows of the said Society had been
near equally divided in their opinions, and no decision of the
same had been made, the College might not equitably and
justifiably pay the expences of both sides out of the common
stock of the said College, after the dividends to the Fellows
and Scholars were paid, which question being thereupon stated
to Mr. Reeve and Mr. Lutwyche, they were both of opinion
the College might do so; and this was and is true, and the
party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bent-
ley's Defen-
sive Plea.

26. That some of the Fellows of the said College, in or
about the month of July or August 1719, informed the said
Dr. Bentley, that many of the Fellows of the College being
very desirous that an end might be put to the contests which
had so long disturbed the College, had drawn up a certificate
to the following effect, viz. "I hereby declare that I sin-
cerely wish that an end may be put to the contests de-
pending, which have for so long time disturbed the College,
and in order thereto, I desire that the charges of each side
may be defrayed out of the public stock of the College;" and
that the said certificate, or one to that effect, was at that time
signed by two thirds of the Fellows of the College, of whom
the said Robert Johnson, the promoter, was one; and this was
and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound
as before.

27. That some time after (viz.), on the fifth day of Decem-

APPEND. ber, 1719, during the stated annual statutable meeting of the Seniors, one of the senior Fellows of the College came to Dr. Bentley from the said meeting, and desired of him that, as so many of the Fellows had so fully declared their desire that an end might be put to the said contests, and the charges of both sides defrayed out of the common stock of the College, he would propose the said question to the Seniors, and call a meeting for that purpose, which accordingly the said Dr. Bentley caused to be duly summoned, and the eight senior Fellows then residing in College, in pursuance of such summons, assembled accordingly, when it was agreed by a majority of them, that the charges of both sides should be defrayed out of the common stock, and Mr. Miller should give a discharge to every member of the said College for all claims occasioned by or depending on the said law-suit, but that no part of the charges of the said law-suit should be in any year paid, unless the College was in such a state of plenty that a whole dividend was first voted. And the said Dr. Bentley did not make use of any indirect practices in order to obtain the consent of the Seniors so assembled; but the same was agreed to voluntarily and freely by five of the eight Seniors together with the said Master, so as aforesaid summoned and assembled; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

28. That whereas it is alleged in the fifty-ninth article, that Dr. Bentley did fraudulently, unjustly, collusively, and unknown to the several members of the said College, make the contract and agreement in the said article referred to, with the said Serjeant Miller; the same is falsely and untruly alleged, and the truth was and is, that the said agreement was not only well known to the several members of the College, but desired by them, and was agreed to by him at their desire, he, the said Dr. Bentley, having had no intercourse by himself or any agent with the said Mr. Miller for several years before the said agreement was entered into, nor had he any, either at that time or since, the persons who settled the same being agents for the College; and this was and is true, and well known to the promoter in this cause, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

29. That whereas it is alleged in the said fifty-ninth article, that the contract or agreement with Mr. Serjeant Miller, re-

lating to the payment or allowance of four hundred and fifty-three pounds to him the said Serjeant Miller, was made by Dr. Bentley with a view only to avoid the pursuit of justice, by engaging the said Serjeant to withdraw a certain petition that had been presented to his said late Majesty, in order to ascertain the visitatorial power; it is therein alleged falsely and untruly, and the truth was and is, that the only motive the said Dr. Bentley had in coming into the said agreement, was the restoring the peace and quiet of the College, which the greatest part of the College so earnestly desired, and in that sense it was taken and understood by the then Fellows of the College, or the major part of them; and that he, the said Dr. Bentley, was so far from avoiding to have the visitatorial power settled, that it was what he always wished and endeavoured to have done, and had even himself petitioned the Crown to direct the same to be settled before any of the said articles were exhibited; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

APPEND.
Dr. Bentley's
Defensive
Plea.

30. That whereas it is alleged in the said fifty-ninth article, that Dr. Bentley procured the aforesaid sum of four hundred and fifty-three pounds to be paid to the said Serjeant out of the College stock, over and above the sum of one hundred pounds to him before in hand paid; it is also falsely and untruly alleged, and the truth was and is, that the said sum of one hundred pounds was not paid to the said Serjeant by order or consent of the said Dr. Bentley, but that the same and several other sums which had before been paid out of the said stock to the said Serjeant, were actually paid without and against this the said Dr. Bentley's consent, and were paid the said Serjeant by the then Seniors in 1710 or 1711, and their adherents, to encourage him, the said Serjeant, to go on with the prosecution before Bishop Moore, against him, the said Dr. Bentley; and this was and is true, and the party proponent doth allege and propound as before.

31. Whereas it is further alleged in the sixty-first of the said pretended articles, that the said Serjeant Miller, in consideration of four hundred and fifty-three pounds, did by writing or instrument under his hand and seal, bearing date the nineteenth day of December, 1719, covenant and agree that he would not at any time after prosecute or proceed upon the before-mentioned petition to his said late Majesty, but would

APPEND. withdraw, or cause the same to be withdrawn; the party proponent doth allege, that at the meeting of the Master and Seniors, had on the fifth day of December, 1719, it was by a majority then present ordered and agreed, that the said Mr. Miller should release the several Fellows of the said College from all demands he had upon them upon any account whatsoever; but that no order or agreement was then made that the said petition should be withdrawn; and if there be any such covenant in the said writing or instrument, the same was therein inserted at the desire of the promoter or others, the agents for the said Fellows, and not at the desire of the said Dr. Bentley, he, the said Dr. Bentley, having always been desirous, and having several times endeavoured to have the said visitatorial power ascertained by a judicial or other proper determination; and the party proponent doth allege, that the said Dr. Bentley consented to the aforesaid agreement, at the desire of the major part of all the Fellows of the said College, who well liked and approved thereof, and in order to restore the peace of the said College, and that all or most of the said Fellows having been one way or other concerned in the said disputes, were desirous the same might be amicably adjusted, and that the expence thereof might be paid out of the said College stock in the manner before set forth, as by the law and statutes of the said College they were empowered to do.

**Dr. Bentley's
Defensive Plea.**

*Sentence pronounced upon Dr. Bentley, by
Bishop Greene.*

“ We, Thomas, by Divine permission Bishop of Ely, and Visitor specially authorized and appointed, by the fortieth chapter of the statutes given by Queen Elizabeth of blessed memory to the Master, Fellows, and Scholars of the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, in the Town and University of Cambridge, of King Henry the Eighth's foundation, to examine the Master of the said College for the time being, of and concerning certain crimes and enormities mentioned and expressed in the second member of the said fortieth chapter, having in a certain cause of office depending before me as Visitor aforesaid, promoted by the Rev. Robert Johnson, clerk, Bachelor of Divinity, one of the Fellows of the said College,

against the Rev. Richard Bentley, Doctor of Divinity, Master of the said College, fully and maturely considered the evidence read on both sides, as well upon the several articles exhibited and admitted before us on the part and behalf of the said Robert Johnson, and upon which his Majesty's writ of Consultation hath been awarded, as on the allegations given and admitted in the said cause on the part and behalf of the said Dr. Richard Bentley; and having likewise considered the several arguments of counsel upon the same with great care and attention, as I shall answer it to Almighty God hereafter, am sincerely of opinion, and I do hereby solemnly and finally declare, pronounce, and adjudge, as Visitor aforesaid, that the said Dr. Richard Bentley, party in the said cause, and Master of the said College, is guilty of dilapidation of the goods of the said College, and also of violation of the said statutes, and that he is duly and legally convicted thereof, before me, as Visitor aforesaid; and that he, the said Dr. Richard Bentley, has thereby incurred the penalty of deprivation of his office of Master of the said College, inflicted in such cases by the fortieth chapter of the said statutes: and I do accordingly, and by the authority aforesaid, pronounce, declare, and adjudge him, the said Dr. Richard Bentley, to be duly and legally convicted thereof before me, as Visitor aforesaid.

APPEND.
Dr. Bentley's Defensive Plea.

"THOMAS ELY."

"April 27th, 1734."

DR. BENTLEY'S WILL.

Extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

To all whom it may concern. Know ye that I, Richard Bentley, Doctor in Divinity, Master of Trinity College in Cambridge, being in good health and perfect memory, and mindful of the accidents human nature is liable to, do make this my last Will and Testament for the disposition of such estates and effects as it hath pleased God to bless me with. Whereas my son-in-law, the Reverend Dennison Cumberland, is indebted to me in the sum of two thousand five hundred

APPEND. pounds, I do hereby dispose of the same as follows; viz. To
Dr. Bentley's Will. my daughter, Joanna Cumberland, his wife, five hundred pounds; to her daughter, Joanna, five hundred pounds; to her son, Richard, five hundred pounds; to her daughter, Elizabeth Bentley Cumberland, five hundred pounds; and to her daughter, Mary, five hundred pounds: the said sums of five hundred pounds to each of the said children I will to be paid them when they come of age respectively; and in case of the death of any of them before they come of age, or of the death of their mother, Joanna, I will that the share or legacy of the persons so dying go amongst all the survivors, equally to be divided amongst them whom I have given the aforesaid legacies to. But my mind and will is, nevertheless, that in case the said Joanna, the mother, shall have one or more child or children hereafter by the said Dennison Cumberland, that in such case the share or legacy of either the said Joanna, the mother, or of any of the aforesaid children dying before they come of age as aforesaid, shall go to such hereafter born child or children to make up to them five hundred pounds each, or such a proportion thereof as the same on an equal division amounts to, and then an equal distribution shall be made of any of the aforesaid legacies, which may happen to fall, equally amongst all of them. And I will, that my son Cumberland shall have the said two thousand five hundred pounds after my decease in his hands without allowing any interest for the same till the legacies become payable, in consideration of his educating them respectively.

Item, I give to my daughter, Elizabeth Ridge, five hundred pounds, to be paid her out of my remaining personal estate; and to Mrs. Mary Ewer one hundred pounds also thereout. And I give and devise to my son, Richard Bentley, all my bank stock, and the dividends and produce due thereon. I also give and devise to Trinity College the five following pictures, viz. Joseph Scaliger's, Sir Isaac Newton's, my spouse, Joanna Bentley's, deceased, and my own, and Baron Ezekiel Spanheim's, which I will to remain in the gallery in my lodge they are now in. And I further also bequeath to the said College all my Greek manuscripts, which were brought from Mount Athos, and by me purchased. The rest and residue of my library I give to my nephew, Richard Bentley, whom I

make sole executor of my last will. And all the rest and residue of my goods and effects not hereby before particularly bequeathed, I give and bequeath, after my funeral expences, to my son Richard Bentley, and my two daughters, Elizabeth and Joanna, to be equally divided amongst them. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-ninth day of May, one thousand seven hundred and forty-one.

APPEND.
Dr. Bentley's Will.

RICHARD BENTLEY.

Sealed, published, and declared by the testator as and for his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who subscribed our names as witnesses thereto, in his presence.

WILLIAM GREAVES,
WILLIAM CARTER,
JOHN PORTER.

Proved at London before the Worshipful Edward Simpson, Doctor of Laws and Surrogate, 10th August, 1742, by the oath of Richard Bentley, the nephew and executor, to whom administration was granted, having been first sworn duly to administer.

NATH. GOSTLING, } Deputy
CHAS. DYNELEY, } Registers.
JOHN IGGULDEN, }

INDEX.

A.

ADDENBROKE, Dr. John, Dean of Litchfield, Bentley's treatment of him in the Theological Schools, ii. 212; anecdote of him, ii. 213, *note*.

Æsop's Fables, Sir W. Temple's opinion of, i. 62; real history of them, i. 86; Bentley's dissertation upon, i. 87.

Aldrich, Dr. Henry, Dean of Christ Church, his mode of distinguishing meritorious students, i. 64.

Alsop, Anthony, his share in the Phalaris controversy, i. 89, 90; his publication of *Æsop*, i. 96; Fable of the Dog in the Manger, i. 97.

Ancient and Modern learning, controversy respecting, i. 59.

Anne, Queen, her visit to Cambridge, i. 183; confers the order of knighthood on Sir I. Newton, i. 184; designs to raise Bentley to the episcopal Bench, i. 222; her death, i. 365.

Arbuthnot, Dr. ridicules Bentley's critical style in *Martinus Scriblerus'* pretended alterations of the two first books of the *Æneid*, ii. 373; attacks him in his *Account of the state of learning in Lilliput*, ii. 374; and *note*.

Archdeacon's parochial visitations, much neglected formerly, ii. 387; question respecting the ground of their claims to procurations, ii. 388.

Aristophanes, Kuster's edition of, particulars respecting, i. 193; Bentley's observations on the two first plays, i. 194.

Ashenhurst, Dr. Ward, supports Bentley, i. 233; is appointed by him Physic-fellow, i. 246; his disrespectful remarks concerning the Queen, i. 261, 262; trial in the Vice Chancellor's court, i. 262; locks up Clarke, the Esquire-beadle, ii. 50; his device for arresting the progress of the grace of

the Senate against Bentley, ii. 59; his death, ii. 309, *note*.

Ashton, Dr. Charles, Master of Jesus College, designed for the Professorship of Divinity, ii. 14; affronted by a remark of Bentley's, ii. 48; supposed to have assisted Middleton in his 'Further Remarks,' &c., ii. 144; his observations on Thirlby's *Justin Martyr*, ii. 167-8.

'**Atheism**, Confutation of,' subject of Bentley's first series of Boyle Lectures, i. 38.

Atheists, discovery of attempts by some to propagate their principles in the University of Cambridge, ii. 391; Mr. Samuel Strutt the oracle of this sect, *ibid.*; remarkable inconsistency of atheistical professors, *ibid.*; Whitehead and Duckett adherents of this society, ii. 392.

Atterbury, Bishop, tutor to the Hon. Charles Boyle, i. 65; his share in the Phalaris controversy, i. 90; probably the author of a tract called 'A Short Review,' i. 178; controversy occasioned by his sermon at the funeral of Bennett, i. 182, *note*; his letters to Dr. Colbatch, i. 263-4; his letter to Bentley on his edition of Horace, i. 323; is attainted and exiled, ii. 209; is succeeded by Bishop Bradford, ii. 212; his attempts to establish the validity of letters-patent of James I. respecting the election of Westminster scholars to fellowships of Trinity College treated with derision by Bentley, ii. 257; Bentley's keen reply to an observation of his, *ibid. note*.

Atwood, Esquire-beadle of Cambridge, his *Journal*, ii. 33, *note*; arrests Bentley, ii. 51; cites him to give evidence before the Vice Chancellor's court, ii. 176.

B.

- Babrius**, a Greek poet, the original composer of the present collection of *Æsop's Fables*, i. 86; Tyrwhitt's Dissertation on, i. 87, *note*.
- Baker**, Dr. John, his character and attachment to Bentley, ii. 84; procures signatures in favour of Bentley's scheme for a bargain with Serjeant Miller, ii. 85; remarks on the transaction, ii. 86.
- Bangorian controversy**, ii. 22.
- Barnes**, Joshua, his character, corresponds with Bentley respecting Epistles ascribed to Euripides, i. 53; his singular behaviour, i. 54; publishes his edition of Homer, i. 291; his hostility to Bentley, *ibid.*; severely criticised by Bentley in his letter to Davies, i. 293; his death and character, i. 296.
- Barretier**, John Philip, reports of his miraculous attainments rest upon insufficient authority, i. 9, *note*.
- Barrow**, Dr. Isaac, funds provided by him for the erection of a library for Trinity College, i. 206-7.
- Battie**, William, candidate for a University scholarship, ii. 214; is elected in preference to Richard Bentley, nephew of the Doctor, ii. 215; founds the scholarship called after his name, ii. 217; regulations respecting the elections to it, *ibid.*
- Benedictines of St. Maur**, high literary reputation of that Society, ii. 123; assistance given by them to Bentley in his edition of the New Testament, *ibid.*; curious circumstance respecting the Italic version of the Scriptures, ii. 124; they are alarmed by an ingenious criticism of Bentley upon a sentence in Augustine, ii. 125; their high commendations of Bentley, ii. 126.
- Bennett**, the bookseller, his application to Bentley for the Manuscript of Phalaris, i. 66, 98; his death and funeral sermon, i. 182, *note*.
- Bentley**, Richard, his birth and parentage, i. 1, 2; sent to the Grammar School of Wakefield, i. 3; sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, i. 5; his college studies, i. 5, 6; specimen of his English verses, i. 7; his contemporaries at the University, i. 8; commences B.A., i. 10; appointed Master of Spalding School, i. 12; appointed tutor to Bishop Stillingfleet's son, i. 13; his theological and Hebrew studies, i. 14; his classical pursuits, i. 15; his late entrance into holy orders accounted for, i. 16; his residence at Oxford, i. 18; his literary acquaintance and employments there, i. 19, 20; ordained deacon, i. 21; appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester, *ibid.*; fails in his attempt to purchase for the University of Oxford the celebrated Vossian library, i. 21, 22; engages in a collection of the Fragments of the Greek Poets, i. 22; and in preparing an edition of the Greek Lexicographers, i. 23; his corrections of Hesychius, i. 24; writes an Appendix to the Oxford edition of the Chronicle of Malelas, i. 27; his dispute with Hody respecting the name *Malelas*, i. 29; commendations of the learned upon his 'Appendix,' i. 31; its style, i. 32; his rule respecting the *Synaphea*, *ibid.*; undertakes an edition of Manilius, i. 34; his favourable opinion of that author decried in the Phalaris controversy, i. 34, 35, *note*; appointed the first Boyle lecturer, i. 38-41; first gives a popular exposition of Newton's discoveries, i. 42; his correspondence with Newton, i. 43; his observations on Gravity, i. 44, *note*; remark on his style, i. 45; appointed Prebendary of Worcester, i. 47; his correspondence with Grævius, i. 49; and with Barnes, i. 52; appointed Keeper of the King's Library, i. 55; his second course of Boyle's Lectures, i. 56; abandons his edition of Philostratus to Olearius of Leipsic, i. 58; becomes involved in the Phalaris controversy, i. 58, 65, 69; origin of it, *ibid.*; assists Evelyn in his 'Discourse on Medals,' i. 71; is introduced by him to Mr. Pepys, *ibid.*; appointed Chaplain to the King, i. 72; takes the degree of D.D., i. 74; his Commencement Sermon, i. 75; his Collection of the Fragments of Callimachus, i. 76; his first Dissertation on Phalaris, i. 78-86; his account of *Æsop's Fables*, i. 86; ridiculed by Swift in the 'Tale of a Tub,' i. 92-94; proposes the erection of a new Royal Library, i. 95; forms a literary club, i. 96; absurd charges against him, i. 100; Keill's attack upon him, i. 110, 111; caricatured at Cambridge, i. 112; criticised by Rymer, i. 113; assailed in 'The Battle of the Books,' i. 114; his strictures on Dodwell's *De Cyclicis Veterum*, i. 119; prepares an enlarged reply to Boyle, i. 120; character of it and quotations from it, i. 121-126; unfounded charge of pla-

gicism, i. 128; his refutation of Dr. King's slanders, i. 130; writes an inscription for Bishop Stillingfleet's monument, i. 134, 135, *note*; his unavailing efforts for the purchase of the Bishop's library, i. 136; his complete success in the Phalaris controversy, *ibid.*; made Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, i. 140; his appointment unpopular, i. 144; his conduct, i. 146—149; is elected Vice Chancellor, i. 150; his marriage, i. 151; Mrs. Bentley's character, *ibid.*; address to the King, i. 153; his management of the University press, i. 154; urges Kuster to publish an edition of Suidas, *ibid.*; made Archdeacon of Ely, i. 156; becomes a member of Convocation, *ibid.*; his edition of Horace commenced, i. 158; his regulations respecting fellowships and scholarships, i. 159; account of his early administration in Trinity College, i. 159—164; his dispute with the senior Fellows, i. 176; prints the text of Horace, i. 188; his 'Critical Epistles' on the *Plutus* and *Clouds* of Aristophanes, i. 194; corresponds with Hemsterhuis, i. 196—198; his children, i. 200; the Fellows complain of him for taking pupils as boarders at the Lodge, i. 201; builds an observatory, i. 202; founds a school of Natural Philosophy, i. 203; his designs for the repairs of Trinity Chapel, i. 205; his financial measures, i. 209—213; malversation in electing a Fellow, i. 214; expulsion of Wyvill and Breval, i. 215, 216; attempts to deprive the Fellows of the Combination-room, i. 219; aspires to the bishoprick of Chichester, i. 220; his Appendix to Davies's *Cicero's Tusculan Questions*, i. 223; character of it, i. 224; his commendations of Davies, *ibid.*; probable account of the origin of the Appendix, i. 225; assists Needham in his edition of Hierocles, i. 226; censured by Wolfius and Warren, i. 227, 228; succeeds in effecting a plan for a new and improved edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia*, i. 228; forms a party among the Fellows, i. 231; proposes a new scheme of dividends, i. 234; account of his proceedings, i. 235—238; his scheme for improving the College livings, i. 239; his plan rejected by the Seniors, i. 240; opposed by Edmund Miller, i. 241; quarrels with the Seniority, i. 243; their declaration against him, i. 244; remarks on his conduct, i. 248; his

Letter to the Bishop of Ely, i. 254; character of it, i. 257; replies to it, i. 258; his second letter to the Bishop of Ely, i. 265; his 'Emendations of Menander and Philemon,' i. 267; extraordinary merits of the work, i. 275; his severe censure of Le Clerc, i. 270; supposed motives, *ibid.*; mystery attending the publication of the 'Emendations,' i. 272; replies to Le Clerc's threatening letter, i. 274; censures Gronovius, i. 276—280; his perilous situation on the accession of the Tory Ministry, i. 281; his dexterous management, *ibid.*; articles of accusation against him, i. 284; assailed by Barnes in the Preface to his *Homer*, i. 291; his letter to Davies, containing severe criticisms on several errors of Barnes's, i. 293—296; his interest with the Queen and the Ministry, i. 297; attempts to procure a Royal Letter in his own favour, i. 298; Bishop Moore requires answers to the accusations against him, i. 299; he petitions the Queen against the Bishop's jurisdiction, *ibid.*; Mr. Secretary St. John directs the Attorney and Solicitor General to examine the allegations, i. 302; their report, *ibid.*; Bentley's Letter to the Lord High Treasurer, i. 304; remarks on his change of party, i. 305; completes his edition of Horace, i. 307; dedication to the Earl of Oxford, i. 308; arrogant language of the preface, i. 309; his opinions on the chronology of the works of Horace, i. 311; reception of the work, i. 313—319; faults in the notes, i. 314; fails in his attempts to terminate the prosecution against him, i. 332; is appointed deputy Vice Chancellor, i. 333; presents an address of the University to the Queen, i. 334; severe grace of the Senate against him, *ibid.*; commendations of him by learned men, i. 336—338; publication of Collins's 'Discourse of Free-thinking,' i. 341; Bentley's reply to Collins, i. 344—348, 350; character of it, i. 348; important remarks on sacred criticism, *ibid.*; exposes Collins, i. 353, *note*; offends Lord Bolingbroke, i. 353; his answer to the articles of accusation against him, i. 356; undertakes a new edition of Terence, i. 360; his trial commences, *ibid.*; Bishop Moore's sentence of deprivation, i. 363; is reconciled with his Fellows, i. 367; his charge to his archdeaconry, i. 370; vote of the Senate against him rescinded, i. 372; vote

of thanks to him by the University, i. 373; his sermon on Popery, i. 379; quotation from it, i. 381; attack upon it, i. 382; anonymous reply, i. 383; his disposal of College livings, i. 389; undertakes an edition of the Greek Testament, i. 397; his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, i. 398; corresponds with Biel, i. 406; projects an edition of classical authors *in usum Principis Frederici*, *ibid.*; his violent measures against Miller, i. 406; his quarrel with Dr. Colbatch, i. 409; suggests a compromise with Miller, i. 414; succeeds in carrying an address to the Throne, i. 419; ferment of the University against him, i. 421, 422; delivers a charge to the clergy, i. 427; attacked by Johnson, in his *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*, ii. 1, 2; and in a ballad entitled *Tom Bostock*, ii. 5; extracts from it, ii. 6, *note*; his sermon before the King, ii. 7; extract from it, ii. 7, 8; is appointed Regius Professor of Divinity, ii. 8: his methods to obtain the appointment, ii. 11; delivers his prælection, ii. 16; rejects 1 John, v. 7, ii. 18; his inaugural speech, ii. 20; account of it, ii. 21, *note*; did not engage in the Bangorian controversy, why? ii. 22; his expensive improvements of his Lodge, ii. 23; his granary, ii. 24; accused of a collusive sale of wheat, ii. 27; his reception of the King and Duke of Somerset at Trinity College, ii. 32; creates some Doctors of Divinity in the King's presence, and delivers an address to his Majesty, ii. 34; demands an additional fee for creating the new Doctors, ii. 37; the demand resisted by several, especially by Conyers Middleton, ii. 38; appeal of the Vice Chancellor and Heads to the Chancellor, ii. 39: opposition by the University, *ibid.*; grounds of his claim, ii. 40; disappointed in his expectation of the support of Government, ii. 43; declines, in consequence, to pursue the third part of Phileleutherus's Remarks on Free-thinking, though solicited by the Princess of Wales to finish it, *ibid.*; his quarrel with Dr. Richard Warren, ii. 44; quarrels with Dr. Gooch, the Vice Chancellor, ii. 46; and with the other Heads, ii. 48; a decree from the Vice Chancellor to arrest him, ii. 49; his behaviour to Edward Clarke, the Esquire-beadle, who was sent to Trinity Lodge with the decree of arrest, ii. 49, 50; his theme to the candidates for fellow-

ships, ii. 50; submits to be arrested, ii. 51; proceedings of the Vice Chancellor's Court against him, *ibid.*; is suspended from all his degrees, ii. 53; appeals to the Delegates from the sentence of the Court, *ibid.*; the appeal refused, ii. 54; prohibited from preaching as Regius Professor of Divinity, *ibid.*; the Vice Chancellor and his counsellors are alarmed at the probable consequences of their own proceedings against Bentley, ii. 55; his submissive behaviour to the Chancellor, ii. 56; who encourages the proceedings against him, *ibid.*; his conduct in consequence of this, ii. 57; Grace of the Senate for his degradation, ii. 58, 59; active efforts of his friends in his favour, ii. 59; deprived of his degrees by the majority, ii. 60; petitions the King against the University, ii. 63; universal interest excited by the question, ii. 65; is defended by A. A. Sykes, ii. 66; and assailed by Sherlock and Middleton, ii. 67—69; writes a pamphlet against Middleton and Miller, ii. 75; remarks upon it, *ibid.*; effect of the contest upon the University at large, ii. 76; the petition of Trinity College against him again read at the Council Board, ii. 80; his device respecting the petition, ii. 80, 81; he concludes a treaty with Miller, ii. 82; opposition of the Seniority, ii. 83; his successful measures to procure their consent, ii. 84, 85; remarks on the transaction, ii. 86; his wanton abuse of authority, pending his treaty with Miller, ii. 89; Squire's appeal to the Bishop of Ely against him, ii. 90; Middleton's pamphlet against his College government, ii. 91; Bentley procures its censure by the Seniority, ii. 93; copy of the decree, ii. 93, 94, *note*; he suspects Colbatch of being the author, ii. 94; prosecutes the publisher, ii. 95; and afterwards prosecutes Middleton upon his confession of the authorship, ii. 96; refuses to present Dr. Colbatch to the living of Orwell, vacant by the death of Dr. Stubbe, ii. 98; contest between them, ii. 99; proposes an accommodation, and is finally obliged to give way, ii. 101, 102; his conduct respecting Catechetical Lectures, ii. 103; his treatment of Mallet and Craister, ii. 104; and of Bouquet, ii. 106; patronizes Dr. Whitfield, *ibid.*; the design of a Royal visitation abandoned, ii. 107; an attempt is made to deprive Bentley of his professorship, ii. 108; application to the Court of

King's Bench for the purpose, ii. 109; Bentley's reply to the deposition, *ibid.*; election for M.P. of the University, effects of the contest upon the future fortunes of Bentley, ii. 110, 111; account of his children, ii. 112; and of his intimate acquaintance, ii. 114; Dr. Davies' high commendations of him in the Dedication of his edition of Cicero *De Natura Deorum*, ii. 115; copy of the Dedication, *ibid.* note; singular deference of Davies to the authority of Bentley in his 2nd edition of the *Tusculan Disputations*, ii. 116; his domestic habits, ii. 117; account of the progress of his edition of the New Testament, ii. 118; zealously assisted by Wetstein, ii. 120; and by John Walker, ii. 122; and by the Benedictines of St. Maur, ii. 123; curious circumstance respecting the *Italic Version* of the Scriptures, ii. 124; Bentley's request for collating of MSS. supported by Montfaucon, ii. 125; he alarms the Benedictines by an ingenious criticism upon a sentence in Augustine, *ibid.*; his proposals for publishing an edition of the New Testament, ii. 127, note; remarks upon his specimen, ii. 129; remarks of his enemies upon the proposals, *ibid.*; especially of Middleton in his 'Remarks,' ii. 130; observations upon them, ii. 132; Bentley suspects Colbatch to be the author, ii. 134; his reply, *ibid.*; virulent abuse of Colbatch, ii. 135; the reply is censured by the Heads, and the printer prosecuted by Colbatch in the Vice Chancellor's court, ii. 139; Smalbroke's letter to him on the disputed text, 1 John v. 7., ii. 146; his edition of the New Testament not stopped (as has been supposed) by Middleton's pamphlet, *ibid.*; great extent of the subscription, ii. 147; fails in his attempt to import paper duty free, ii. 148; employs David Casley to collate the Oxford MSS., ii. 149; Middleton, having been convicted of a libel in his 'True State of Trinity College,' begs pardon of him, ii. 153; disputes the opinions of Edmund Chishull, respecting an ancient Greek inscription found at Sigeum, ii. 158; his ingenious restoration of an old Delian inscription, ii. 160; his edition of Horace censured by Cunningham, ii. 161—6; is violently attacked by Styan Thirlby in the preface and dedication of his edition of Justin Martyr, ii. 167; is highly commended

by Professor Smith in the preface to the *Harmonia Mensurarum* of Cotes, ii. 168; revises the *Theriaca* of Nicander, at the instance of Dr. Mead, ii. 170; is attacked in 'The Spy,' ii. 171; Bentley's declared opinion of the character and talents of Mr. Boyle, ii. 172; copy of verses by Bentley, ii. 174; Colbatch continues his prosecution against him for a libel, ii. 175; Bentley cited to give evidence in the Vice Chancellor's court, ii. 176; artfully eludes the summons, ii. 177; a rule granted by the Court of King's Bench to stop the proceedings of the University against him, ii. 178; the proceedings against him dropped, ii. 182; he prosecutes Colbatch's *Jus Academicum*, ii. 183; applies to the Court of King's Bench for restoration to his degrees, ii. 190; assailed by Middleton, in a Latin tract respecting the arrangement of the books in the University library, ii. 200; prosecutes Middleton for a reflection on the Judges of the King's Bench, ii. 201; the Judges give their opinions, on Bentley's suspension, against the University, ii. 204; peremptory Mandamus of the Court to restore him to his degrees, ii. 205, 206; is restored after a deprivation of five years and a half, ii. 208; Middleton's action for the recovery of four guineas renewed, ii. 209; Bentley refunds them, ii. 210; declines the offer of the bishoprick of Bristol, ii. 211; great expense of his law-suits, *ibid.*; his rough reply to the Judges at Trinity Lodge, *ibid.*; anecdote of him, respecting his behaviour as Moderator in the first Divinity act after his restoration, ii. 213, note; his conduct with respect to his nephew, Richard Bentley, candidate for a University scholarship, ii. 214, 215; resumes his edition of Terence, ii. 217; causes of offence between him and Dr. Hare, ii. 218, and ii. 223; prints an edition of Terence to supplant that of Hare, ii. 225; character and contents of Bentley's edition, ii. 225—227; his hasty edition of Phædrus, ii. 229; exposed by Hare, in his *Epistola Critica*, ii. 232; rupture between him and Burman, ii. 236; edition of Lucan, ii. 237; perseveres in his design of publishing the New Testament, ii. 239; obtains collations of a considerable part of the Vatican MS. *ibid.*; controversy with Burford respecting the selection of Public Orator, ii. 243; appoints Dr. Newcome his Deputy in the Divinity School, ii.

246; brief review of some transactions in the last five years, *ibid.*; opposition to him at an end, ii. 248; his son is chosen Fellow, *ibid.*; his conduct respecting the lease of Massam House, in the City of York, ii. 249; and respecting the South Meadow, ii. 251; builds a summer residence at Over, near Cambridge, where he had an annual fishing party, *ibid.*; completes the repairs and decorations of Trinity Chapel, and erects the clock, dial, and bells, ii. 252; presents the old clock to Dr. Colbatch for his Church at Orwell, ii. 253; enumeration of distinguished scholars admitted by him to fellowships, *ibid. note*; rejects Benjamin Stillingfleet, grandson of the bishop, ii. 254; incurs much odium in consequence, *ibid.*; Colbatch takes advantage of the outcry against him, ii. 255, 256; Bentley denies the assumed validity of the letters of James I., ii. 260; and defies his opponents, *ibid.*; the Seniority unanimously agree to support him, *ibid.*; his efforts in securing the return of the Hon. Edward Finch and the Hon. Thomas Townshend, as Members of Parliament for the University, greatly strengthen his interests against his opponents, ii. 263; fresh attempts to procure a visitation of Trinity College, *ibid.*; five leading counsel concur in pronouncing that the Bishop of Ely is Visitor of Trinity College, ii. 264; creates fifty-eight Doctors of Divinity on the occasion of the visit of George II. in 1728, ii. 266; entertains the King at his College, *ibid.*; soon recovers from a dangerous illness, ii. 267; gives his daughter Joanna in marriage to Mr. D. Cumberland, *ibid.*; Colbatch renews his efforts to call him to account before the Visitor, *ibid.*; his treatment of Robert Johnson, Fellow of Trinity, who joins Colbatch's party against him, ii. 269; he anticipates his prosecutors, ii. 270; draws up a petition to the King, *ibid.*; tumultuous meeting at the College Chapel, ii. 271; the petition is presented to the King by Mr. Greaves, ii. 272; writes a pamphlet entitled 'The Case of Trinity College, whether the Crown or Bishop of Ely be the General Visitor,' ii. 273; Colbatch's reply, ii. 274; the Privy Council declines all interference, ii. 275; Bentley's dispute with Archbishop Wake on the library-keeper's place, *ibid.*; decided by the Attorney General, ii. 278;

obtains an order of the Seniority that all expenses resulting from these proceedings should be defrayed from the revenues of the College, ii. 280; is cited by Bishop Greene, *ibid.*; applies to the Court of King's Bench for a prohibition, which is refused, *ibid.*; the Bishop sends him a copy of the articles against him, ii. 282; charge of daily neglect of service in the College Chapel, *ibid.*; defends himself upon the ground of delicate health, *ibid.* and ii. 283 *note*; general remarks upon the articles, ii. 283; he appears at Ely House, ii. 284; his objections against the articles, *ibid.*; applies a second time to the Court of King's Bench for a prohibition, ii. 285; the prohibition continued, ii. 286; resumes his edition of the New Testament, *ibid.*; communicates with Dr. Delany and Mr. Doyle respecting the verse of the Heavenly Witnesses found in a Greek MS. in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, ii. 287, and *note*; corresponds also with Baron de Stosch respecting the Vatican MS., ii. 288; probable reason for the non-appearance of the edition of the New Testament, ii. 289; rule for a prohibition made absolute, *ibid.*; Bentley's management in defeating the proceedings of the Bishop of Ely, ii. 290; refuses the offer of the Deanery of Lincoln, vacant by the death of Dr. Gee, ii. 291; received in triumph by his adherents on his return to Cambridge, ii. 292; satirical lines written upon the occasion, *ibid. note*; vindictive measures against his prosecutors, ii. 296; his severe treatment of Ingram, Mason, and Parne, ii. 296-8; his pithy reply to the last, ii. 298; the Court of King's Bench overrules his objections against Bishop Greene's proceedings ii. 299; the Judges entertain doubts respecting the validity of the statutes of Elizabeth, ii. 300; new complexion of the case in consequence, *ibid.*; they continue the prohibition on Bishop Greene, ii. 301; termination of the cause, ii. 302; expenses of the two parties, *ibid.*; situation of affairs after the decision of the Judges, ii. 303; Colbatch draws up a new set of articles, *ibid.*; Bentley's measures against the Visitor, ii. 304; petitions the King, *ibid.*; Bishop Greene greatly displeased at this, ii. 305; the Attorney General refuses the *fiat*, *ibid.*; the case carried by writ of error to the House of Lords, *ibid.*; Bentley's

acquaintance with Lord Chancellor King, ii. 306; fire in the Cottonian Library, ii. 308; origin of Bentley's edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ii. 309; his want of qualification for this work, ii. 310; his notion of a fictitious reviser, ii. 311; presumptuous character of the book, ii. 313; public opinion of it, ii. 318; real merits of his edition of Milton, ii. 320; publications against it, ii. 322; especially Pearce's 'Review,' ii. 323; Colbatch's able pamphlet on the Visitation jurisdiction of the Bishop of Ely, ii. 325; Bentley's treatment of Mr. Porter Thomson, *ibid.*; the cause between him and Bishop Greene comes on in the House of Lords, ii. 326-7; Bishop Sherlock's powerful speech against him, ii. 327; the House reverses the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 328; detail of the proceedings, ii. 328. 337; Bentley commences an edition of Homer, ii. 331; his second trial at Ely House, ii. 337; his 'Defensive Plea,' ii. 337-8; evidence for the prosecution and defence, ii. 339; heads of accusation against him, ii. 340; expense of the defence, ii. 343; is sentenced to be deprived of his Mastership, ii. 344; reported dissent of the Bishop's assessors, *ibid.*; his device to frustrate the sentence, ii. 346; Dr. Hacket, the Vice-master, neglects to execute the sentence against him, ii. 348; resigns, and is succeeded by Dr. Richard Walker, ii. 349; Bentley is enabled to maintain his station, through a probable error in the statute, ii. 351; Colbatch petitions the House of Lords for execution of the sentence, ii. 353; Dr. Richard Walker effects a compromise between him and some of his most active opponents, ii. 354; resumes his edition of Homer, ii. 356; particular account of it, ii. 360; great difficulty of the undertaking, ii. 365; restores the use of the *Digamma*, ii. 361; history of his discovery of it, ii. 362; Dawes's enmity against him, ii. 367; probable causes of it, ii. 368-9; Heyne's satisfaction on receiving his corrected copy of Homer, ii. 371, and *note*; Pope's hostility to him, ii. 372; remarks on it, ii. 372-3, his opinion of Pope's translation of Homer, *ibid.*; lines against him by Pope in the *Dunciad*, ii. 375; the lines altered in a subsequent edition, ii. 376; attacked by Mallet, in his 'Poem on Verbal Cri-

ticism,' *ibid.*; and by Pope, in his 'Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,' ii. 378; a Mandamus is addressed to the Bishop of Ely to compel Dr. Walker to execute the sentence of deprivation, ii. 380; a third Mandamus to enforce the execution of the sentence against him, ii. 382; the Court of King's Bench discharges the rule, ii. 384; the contest finally terminated by the death of Bishop Greene, in 1738, ii. 385; brings an action against Dr. Colbatch for proxies due to him as Archdeacon of Ely, ii. 387; the case is decided in his favour, ii. 389; discovery of a sect of Atheists in the University, ii. 391; his behaviour at the trial of Duckett for the propagation of atheistical principles, ii. 394; his treatment of the 'Society for the encouragement of Learning,' ii. 395; publishes his edition of Manilius, ii. 397; observations on it, *ibid.*; is afflicted with a paralytic stroke, ii. 398; is disabled from pursuing his edition of Homer, ii. 399; death of Mrs. Bentley, *ibid.*; his companions and amusements, ii. 400; his domestic habits, *ibid.*; Cumberland's account of him, ii. 401-4; is attacked by Pope in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*, ii. 405-6; his behaviour to Miller the botanist, ii. 406; Warburton's treatment of him, ii. 409; his sagacious correction of a copy of a Greek inscription, ii. 411-12; his last illness and death, ii. 413; his funeral, *ibid.*; disposition of his property, ii. 414; his library and papers, ii. 415; remarks on his personal character, ii. 416; his literary merits, 417.

Bentley, Richard, son of Dr. Bentley, account of him in early youth, ii. 112; made Fellow of Trinity College, ii. 248; his father's bequests to him, ii. 414.

Bentley, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Doctor Bentley, her character, ii. 113; married to Humphrey Ridge, Esq. ii. 400; afterwards to the Rev. James Favell, ii. 416.

Bentley, Joanna, youngest daughter of Dr. Bentley, remarkable for the graces of her mind and person, ii. 113; lines in commendation of her, inserted in the *Spectator*, by Byrom, *ibid.*; married to Mr. Denison Cumberland, ii. 267.

Bentley, Richard, nephew of Dr. Bentley, particulars of his contest for a University Scholarship, ii. 214-15; endeavours to dissuade his uncle from publishing his edition of Milton, ii.

- 316; edits his *Manillius*, ii. 397; Bentley's books and papers bequeathed to him, ii. 415; gives a part to Cumberland, *ibid.*; leaves a part to Trinity College, *ibid.*
- Bentley, Thomas, nephew of Dr. Bentley, publishes a small edition of Horace, i. 340; his literary excursion through France and Italy in 1725, ii. 239; assists Dr. Bentley in his edition of the New Testament, by collating MSS. in Paris, Rome, &c., *ibid.*; brief account of his literary pursuits and travels, ii. 239-42; Dr. Davies's papers, committed to his care by Dr. Mead, are, through his carelessness, destroyed by fire, ii. 357; account of the accident, *ibid.* and *note*; his edition of the hymns of Callimachus, and of Cæsar's Commentaries, ii. 407; his death, ii. 408.
- Bergler, Stephen, his eminent skill in the Greek language, i. 277; reviews the controversy on Menander, *ibid.*
- Berkeley, Dr. George (Bishop of Cloyne), replies to Collins, i. 343.
- Bernard, Dr. Edward, his correspondence with Bentley respecting the Appendix to the Chronicle of *Malelas*, i. 28.
- Bibliotheca Literaria*, a classical miscellany edited by Dr. Samuel Jebb, account of it, ii. 169.
- Bibliothèque Universelle*, John Le Clerc one of the principal writers in, i. 267.
- Bibliothèque Choisie*, a quarterly review of literary publications, conducted by Le Clerc, i. 267.
- Biel, John Christian, corresponds with Bentley respecting Hesychius, i. 405.
- Bolingbroke, Lord, *see St. John*.
- Boulter, Dr. Hugh, Dean of Christ-Church, appointed Archbishop of Armagh, ii. 211.
- Boyle, the Honourable Robert; his death and character i. 37; his lectureship, i. 38; Bentley appointed first lecturer, *ibid.*
- Boyle, the Honourable Charles (Earl of Orrery), appointed editor of *Phalaris*, i. 64; his character, i. 64, 65; applies to Bennet, the bookseller, for a collation of the King's manuscript, i. 65; his reflections upon Bentley, i. 69; his Examination of Bentley's Dissertation, i. 97; remarks upon it, *ibid.* i. 101; quotations from it, i. 103-107; causes of its popularity, i. 107; is himself dissatisfied with the performance of Atterbury and his other assistants, i. 109; said to have visited Bentley at Cambridge, ii. 172; is committed to the Tower on suspicion of being engaged in the plot for the restoration of the Pretender, ii. 209.
- Breval, John Durant, account of his expulsion from his fellowship by Bentley, i. 216; his history, *ibid.*
- Brookbank, Dr. John, friend of Bentley; his character, i. 186; complaint against him as Official of the Archdeacon, i. 334; his death, ii. 212; his epitaph, written by Bentley, *ibid. note*.
- Burman, Peter; his hostility to Le Clerc, i. 272; his edition of Petronius Arbiter, *ibid.*; *Le Gazetteur Menteur*, *ibid.*; receives by an unknown hand Bentley's 'Emendations on the Fragments of Menander and Philemon', *ibid.*; publishes them with a preface, i. 273; Bentley's renewal of his correspondence with him, ii. 118; publishes an edition of Phædrus, ii. 235; rupture between Bentley and him, ii. 236-7; his edition of Lucan, ii. 238.
- Byrom, John; lines in the Spectator, in commendation of Joanna Bentley, youngest daughter of Dr. Bentley, written by him, ii. 113; remarks on them, *ibid.*

C.

Cambridge, University of, extraordinary number of students there, at the time of Bentley's admission, i. 5; objects of study at that time, i. 7; unsatisfactory mode which formerly prevailed in the distribution of academical honours, i. 10; present plan, i. 11; fellowships at St. John's College, *ibid.*; Bentley renovates the University press, i. 73. 153; brief history of Trinity College, i. 140; Queen Anne's visit to, i. 183; deputation appointed to represent the University at the Jubilee at Frankfurt on the Oder, i. 191; omits to address the Queen on the dismissal of the Whig ministry, i. 289; state of politics at the general election, *ibid.*; expulsion of Professor Whiston, i. 290; address to the Queen, i. 334; remarks on University politics, i. 375; comparison with those of Oxford, *ibid.*; Royal present of Bishop Moore's library to the University, i. 377; George I. visits the University, ii. 31; great agitation produced by the quarrel with Bentley, ii. 76; the design of a Royal visitation abandoned, ii. 107; election of M.P. for the University, ii. 110; a rule from the Court of King's Bench, to stop the proceedings of the University against Bentley, ii. 178;

- Bentley petitions the Court of King's Bench to obtain from the University his restoration to his degrees, ii. 190; the University employs Sir Philip Yorke as counsel, ii. 192; long connexion between the University and his family, *ibid.*; state of the case between the University and Bentley, ii. 203; the Judges of the Court of King's Bench deliver their opinions *seriatim* against the University, ii. 204; Chief Justice Pratt delivers the final judgment of the Court against it, ii. 206; proceedings of the University in consequence, *ibid.*; a professorship of Modern History founded by George I. ii. 210; the Senate gives a double vote to the Vice-Chancellor in equally balanced cases, ii. 215; origin of that regulation, ii. 214-16; election of Public Orator, ii. 242; political events there upon the death of George I. in 1727, ii. 261; account of the general election, ii. 262; George II. visits the University, ii. 264; presents 2000*l.* towards the completion of the Senate House, ii. 266, and *note*; the new Senate House completed, ii. 292; ceremonies at its opening, ii. 292-3; Taylor's music speech, ii. 294; discovery of an attempt to propagate atheistical principles there, ii. 391.
- Carleton, Lord, President of the Council, befriends Dr. Colbatch, in the case of *Jus Academicum*, ii. 194.
- Carteret, Lord, Secretary of State; Dr. Freind uses his interest with him in behalf of Colbatch, in the case of *Jus Academicum*, ii. 184; his promises, and subsequent conduct, ii. 188; holds the Lieutenancy of Ireland at the time when Wood's patent was attacked by Swift, ii. 323-4; his intimacy with Bentley, and his love of classical literature, *ibid.*; amusing anecdote respecting him and Bentley, *ibid. note*; his speech in the House of Lords in the case of appeal between Bishop Greene and Bentley, ii. 332-3; urges Bentley to undertake an edition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ii. 364.
- Casley, David, Bentley's deputy in the King's and Cottonian libraries, employed by him to collate the Oxford MSS. for his edition of the New Testament, ii. 149.
- Chishull, Edmund, publishes a commentary on an ancient Greek inscription found at Sigeeum, ii. 156-7; his opinions disputed by Bentley, ii. 158-9; Bentley's sagacious correction of a copy of a Greek inscription, inserted by him in his *Antiquitates Asiaticæ*, ii. 411-12.
- Clarke, Edward, Esquire-beadle, his conduct and treatment respecting the decree of arrest against Bentley, ii. 49-50.
- Clarke, Dr. Samuel, his edition of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, i. 336; his high commendations of Bentley, i. 337; Bentley's letter to, i. 425; his edition of Homer's *Iliad*, ii. 363.
- Clergy, English, non-juring temper in 1716, i. 425, 426.
- Colbatch, Dr. John; correspondence between him and Atterbury, i. 263; account of him, i. 383-6; his conduct in College, i. 386; Bentley offers to him the Vice-mastership, i. 389; quarrels with him, i. 410; his letters to Bishop Fleetwood, ii. 30; his Commemoration sermon, *ibid.*; his earnest endeavours to solicit the attention of Government to the grievances of the College, ii. 79; in vain solicits Bishop Fleetwood to interfere, ii. 88; urges Squire to appeal to the Visitor against Bentley's rejection of him, ii. 90; disputes Bentley's interpretation of a College statute, ii. 91; claims the living of Orwell, vacant by the death of Dr. Stubbe, ii. 98; accused by Bentley of being the author of the 'Remarks' written by Middleton, on the 'Proposals' for a new edition of the New Testament, ii. 134; is virulently abused by him, ii. 135; seeks redress for the injury, ii. 138; prosecutes the printer in the Vice-Chancellor's court, ii. 139; declines to present the thanks of the Senate to the Earl of Nottingham, ii. 141; is dissuaded from publishing his 'Case of Richard Bentley,' &c., ii. 151; continues his prosecution of Bentley for a libel, ii. 175; writes *Jus Academicum*, ii. 179; extracts from it, ii. 180-1; the publication prosecuted by Bentley, ii. 183; is greatly alarmed, *ibid.*; interest in his favour with the Ministers, ii. 184; the publisher is committed, ii. 186; his interview with Chief Justice Pratt, ii. 185-6; is publicly declared to be the author by the publisher, ii. 186; solicits the King's pardon, ii. 187; the encouraging promises of Lord Townshend and Lord Carteret, ii. 188; further account of his case, ii. 193; particulars of his treatment by Lord Townshend and Lord Macclesfield, ii. 195-6; is committed, ii. 197; his sentence, ii. 198; speech of Mr. Justice Powis concerning *Jus Academicum*, ii. 198;

Bentley offers to him the old clock of Trinity College for his Church at Orwell, ii. 253; takes advantage of the outcry against Bentley, in consequence of his rejection of Bishop Stillingfleet's grandson, to renew his efforts against him, ii. 255; particulars of his application to Bishop Gibson, *ibid.*; solicits the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to interfere to procure the appointment of a Visitor for Trinity College, ii. 256; renews his prosecution of Bentley, ii. 263. 267; is assisted only by Parne, Ingram, and Mason, *ibid.*; is soon afterwards joined by Robert Johnson, ii. 269; account of him, *ibid.*; Colbatch's reply to Bentley's 'Case of Trinity College,' ii. 274; appeals to Archbishop Wake respecting Bentley's nephew, the Librarian, ii. 275; is afflicted with illness, and Johnson is deputed to act as promoter of the suit against Bentley, ii. 279; is powerfully aided by Mr. Edward Smith, *ibid.*; the Judges discover a flaw in the proceedings, ii. 301; termination of the cause in consequence, *ibid.*; expenses of Colbatch and Bentley, ii. 302; situation of affairs after the decision of the Judges, ii. 303; Colbatch draws up a new set of articles, *ibid.*; satisfies Bishop Greene respecting the expenses of the proceedings against Bentley; ii. 307 and *note*; his able pamphlet in defence of the Bishop of Ely's visitatorial power, ii. 325; the case comes on in the House of Lords, ii. 326; the House reverses the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 328; is candidate to represent in Convocation the clergy of the diocese of Ely, ii. 350; petitions the House of Lords for execution of the sentence against Bentley, ii. 353; Colbatch applies to the Court of King's Bench for a Mandamus, which is granted, ii. 356; termination of the contest by the death of Bishop Greene, 1737, ii. 385; Colbatch's expenses, ii. 386; Bentley, as Archdeacon of Ely, brings an action against him, ii. 387; the case is decided against him, ii. 389; his able tract, 'The case of Proxies payable to ecclesiastical Visitors,' ii. 390; his death, ii. 420.

Complutensian edition of the Bible, the Vatican MS. not used in revising the text of, ii. 146.

Constable, Sir Marmaduke, Fellowship at St. John's College, Cambridge, founded by him, i. 12.

Cotes, Roger, first Astronomical Pro-

fessor at Cambridge, i. 202; his observations and lectures, i. 203; superintends the repairs of Trinity College, Chapel, i. 208; the most distinguished of Bentley's partizans, i. 233; his share in the new edition of Newton's *Principia*, i. 229. 338; urges Bentley to write the Preface, i. 339; his commendation of Bentley, *ibid.*; his death, i. 401; the inscription on his monument written by Bentley, i. 402, *note*.

Cowley, Abraham, character of his style, i. 6; short account of him, i. 141, *note*.

Crosse, Dr., is elected to succeed Dr. Gooch as Vice Chancellor, ii. 140; his character and conduct, *ibid.*; is re-elected Vice Chancellor, ii. 176; grants Dr. Colbatch's petition against Bentley, *ibid.*; lays the first stone of the Senate House, 1722, ii. 199.

Cumberland, Richard; his remarks upon Dr. Bentley's origin, i. 1, 2; inaccuracy of them, *note*, i. 3; publishes Newton's four letters to Bentley, i. 43, *note*; his account of Dr. Bentley, from his 'Memoirs,' ii. 401-4.

Cunningham, Alexander, discovers Bentley's authorship of the Emendations on the fragments of Menander and Philemon, i. 274; some account of him, ii. 161; distinguished from the historian of the same name, *ibid.*; censures Bentley's Horace, *ibid.*; labours to destroy Bentley's credit, ii. 162; remarks on his Animadversions on Bentley's Horace, ii. 162-7; comparison between Bentley and him, ii. 164.

D.

Davies, Dr. John, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, his edition of Cicero's Tusculan Questions, i. 223; Bentley's emendations, *ibid.*; Bentley's letter to him, exposing the errors of Barnes in his edition of Homer, i. 293; appointed President of Queen's, ii. 13; supports Bentley when candidate for the Divinity Professorship, ii. 14, 15; created D.D. in the King's presence, ii. 34; opposes the vote for degrading Bentley, ii. 61, *note*; his edition of *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, ii. 115; his death, ii. 356; his papers, committed by Dr. Mead to the care of Thomas Bentley, are unfortunately destroyed by fire, ii. 356-7.

Dawes, Richard, his disingenuous treatment of Bentley with respect to his explanation of an old Delian inscrip-

- tion, ii. 161; his account of the *Æolic Digamma* in his *Miscellanea Critica*, ii. 367; his enmity against Bentley, ii. 368; probable cause of it, ii. 369-70; his extraordinary diligence, ii. 369; remarks on his book, *ibid.*; his unjust treatment of Bentley, *ibid.*; his knowledge of the *Digamma* derived wholly from Bentley, ii. 370; his vulgar and quarrelsome habits, ii. 371; failure of his attempts to appropriate to himself the credit due to Bentley, *ibid.*
- Delany, Dr. P., Bentley communicates with him and Mr. Doyle respecting the disputed verse of the Heavenly Witnesses, found in the Dublin Greek MS., ii. 286; his opinion on that controversy, ii. 287, *note*.
- De Pauw, John Cornelius, his literary character, i. 277; his book against Bentley, under the name of Philargyrius Cantabrigiensis, i. 278-9.
- Digamma*, the *Æolic*, the use of it restored by Bentley in his proposed edition of Homer, ii. 361; account of it, ii. 361-65; employed by Mr. Payne Knight in his restoration of the Homeric text, ii. 366; pronunciation of it, *ibid.*; Blackwell's account of a conversation with Bentley, respecting it, ii. 367, *note*.
- Dodwell, Henry, his work *De Cyclis Feterum*, improved by hints from Bentley, i. 119-20; disputes the opinions of Bentley and Lloyd respecting the age of Pythagoras, i. 180.
- Ducket, Tinkler, Fellow of Caius College, his efforts in propagating atheistical principles in his College, ii. 392; the existence of his sect discovered by means of a letter of his, *ibid.*; his trial, ii. 393; and sentence of expulsion, ii. 398.
- ii. 220; his edition of Terence recommended to Hare by Bentley, *ibid.*
- Finch, the Hon. Henry, son of the Earl of Nottingham, contest between him and the Hon. Thomas Willoughby for the representation of the University of Cambridge, ii. 110.
- Finch, the Hon. Edward, brother to the last, is supported by Bentley as candidate for the University, ii. 262; is elected, and continues representative nearly fifty years, *ibid.*
- Fisher, Dr. Bardsey, Master of Sidney College, appointed by the Vice Chancellor to create those who withstood Bentley's demand of an additional fee for creating Doctors in Divinity, ii. 39.
- Fleetwood, Dr. succeeds Dr. Moore, Bishop of Ely, i. 367; refuses to take cognizance of the articles of accusation against Bentley, i. 370; refuses a second time, ii. 88; his death, ii. 247; is succeeded by Bishop Greene, *ibid.*
- Fontenelle, originates the controversy respecting ancient and modern learning, i. 59.
- Fortescue, Sir John, a Judge of the Court of King's Bench, has been confounded with Sir William Fortescue, the friend of Pope, ii. 187, *note*; his severity to the publisher of *Jus Academicum*, ii. 186-7.
- Freind, Dr. Robert, Master of Westminster School, interests himself with Lord Carteret in Colbatch's favour, ii. 184; co-operates with Dr. Colbatch against Bentley, ii. 258.
- Freind, John, M.D., his share in the Phalaris controversy, i. 89, 90; is committed with Lord Orrery to the Tower, ii. 209.

E.

- Emlyn, the Arian, dispute between him and Martin of Utrecht respecting the disputed text in the first epistle of St. John, ii. 16.
- Evelyn, Mr., solicits Bentley to publish his second course of Boyle's Lectures, i. 56; fails in his endeavour to procure for him a Lambeth degree, i. 71; assists him in his project for the erection of a new Royal Library, i. 95, 96; his warm friendship towards him, i. 117.

F.

- Faernus, Gabriel, an illustrious scholar,

G.

- Gale, Dr. Thomas, Dean of York, tutor to the Hon. Charles Boyle, i. 64, *note*, *ibid.*; suggests some corrections in his book, i. 110.
- Garth, Dr. Samuel, Bentley's contemporary at Cambridge, i. 8; his lines upon Bentley's book, i. 112.
- Gastrell, Bishop, made Boyle's Lecturer, i. 77; upholds the rights of the Universities, ii. 140-1; befriends Colbatch, ii. 194.
- George I., his visit to Cambridge, ii. 31; his reception in Trinity College, ii. 34; gives 2000*l.* towards the erection of the Senate House, ii. 210; founds Professorships of Modern History at

- Oxford and Cambridge, *ibid.*; his death in 1727, ii. 261.
- George II., visits the University of Cambridge, ii. 264; account of his reception, ii. 265; dines in the hall of Trinity College, ii. 266; presents 2000*l.* towards the completion of the Senate House, *ibid.*
- Gibson, Dr., Bishop of London, his high character, ii. 255; Dr. Colbatch applies to him respecting the state of Trinity College, *ibid.*; his advice and opinion upon the subject, ii. 255-6.
- Gevartius, an edition of Manilius projected by him, i. 49; his opinion of the poet's age, i. 49, 50.
- Gooch, Dr. Thomas, elected Vice Chancellor of Cambridge, ii. 42; his family and character, *ibid.*; his official conduct gives offence to Government, ii. 45; deprived of his Chaplaincy to the King, ii. 46; Bentley quarrels with him, *ibid.*; pronounces the sentence against Bentley of suspension from all his degrees, ii. 53; his smart reply to Bentley's inquiry respecting the meaning and consequence of the sentence, ii. 54; is alarmed at the magnitude of his own proceedings, ii. 53; applies to the Chancellor, ii. 56; delivers a speech to the Senate against Bentley, ii. 58; proposes a grace for his degradation, *ibid.*; is re-elected Vice Chancellor, ii. 63; lays an account of the proceedings before the King in Council, ii. 64; the matter is referred to a committee of the Privy Council, *ibid.*; pretended plots against him, ii. 77; is chosen Vice Chancellor for the third time, ii. 108; attempts to deprive Bentley of his professorship, ii. 109; exerts himself in favour of the Whig interest, ii. 293.
- Gospel, "Society for the Propagation of," assailed by Collins, i. 346.
- Grævius, John George, his commendations of Bentley, i. 31, 51, 54; corresponds with him, i. 49; his edition of Callimachus, i. 52; published, i. 76; his death, i. 159.
- Greaves, Mr. Commissary, presents Bentley's petition to the King at Hampton Court, ii. 272; his long connexion with Trinity College, *ibid.*; brief account of him, *ibid.*
- Greene, Dr. Thomas, Bishop of Norwich, translated to the see of Ely upon the death of Bishop Fleetwood, 1723, ii. 247; shews himself averse to interfere with the affairs of Trinity College, *ibid.*; petitions the King in Council, ii. 272-3; cites Bentley to appear before him, ii. 280; Bentley applies to the Court of King's Bench for a prohibition, which is refused, ii. 281-2; sends Bentley a copy of the articles against him, ii. 282; rule for a prohibition made absolute by the Court of King's Bench, ii. 289; proceedings of the Bishop thereupon, ii. 290; the Court of King's Bench overrules Bentley's objections against his proceedings, ii. 299; extraordinary doubts entertained by the Judges respecting the validity of the Statutes of Elizabeth, ii. 300; effects of this view of the subject upon the proceedings, ii. 300-1; appeals to the House of Lords to reverse the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 306; his measure respecting the future expense of the proceedings, ii. 306-7, and *note*; the case between him and Bentley argued in the House of Lords, ii. 326-7, it is decided against the Court of King's Bench, ii. 328; detail of the proceedings, ii. 326-36; cites Bentley to appear at Ely House, ii. 337; evidence for the prosecution and defence, ii. 339-42; sentences Bentley to be deprived of his Mastership, ii. 344; reported dissent of his assessors, *ibid.*; a mandamus from the Court of King's Bench to him to compel Dr. Walker to execute the sentence, ii. 380; another mandamus, ii. 382; his death, 1737, puts an end to the contest between Bentley and his prosecutors, ii. 385.
- Grigg, Dr. William, nominated with Bentley for the place of Vice Chancellor, i. 423; circumstances of his election, i. 425; makes Bentley his deputy, ii. 13; his behaviour on the visit of the King and the Duke of Somerset to the University, ii. 32, 33.
- Gronovius, James, his hostility to Bentley, i. 225-6; his general character, i. 226; severely censured by Bentley, i. 276; his violent abuse of Bentley in his *Infamia Emendationum*, &c. *ibid.*

H.

- Hacket, Dr. John, made dean of Trinity College, ii. 90; some account of him, *ibid.*; is appointed Vice Master, ii. 348; is commanded by the Bishop of Ely to execute the sentence of deprivation against Bentley, *ibid.*; resigns his office, ii. 349; is succeeded by Walker, *ibid.*
- Hare, Dr. Francis, Bentley's emenda-

- tions on Menander sent to him in Holland for publication, i. 274; 'Remarks on Freethinking' dedicated to him, i. 344; publishes the 'Clergyman's Thanks to Phileleutherus,' i. 348; interests himself in favour of Colbatch, ii. 184; causes of offence between Bentley and him, ii. 218; his knowledge of the Latin comic metres derived from Bentley, ii. 219; publishes his edition of Terence, ii. 220; remarks on it, ii. 221; dedicates it to Lord Townshend, ii. 222; character of the dedication, *ibid.*; Bentley's resentment against the editor, ii. 223; occasions his own edition, ii. 225; exposes Bentley's Phædrus in his 'Epistola Critica,' ii. 232; character of this epistle, *ibid.*; Hare's inconsistency, ii. 233; his real admiration of Bentley, ii. 234; is appointed Dean of St. Paul's, and Bishop of St. Asaph, ii. 235.
- Hawkins, John, Bentley attempts to remove him from the number of Senior Fellows, i. 262.
- Hemsterhuis, Tiberius, engaged to superintend an edition of the *Onomasticon* of Julius Pollux, i. 196; corresponds with Bentley, i. 197; the effect of Bentley's letters upon him, i. 198.
- Hesychius, Lexicon of, Bentley's corrections of it, i. 124; Verwey's edition of, *ibid.*; Kuster projects an edition, i. 192; does not live to complete it, i. 404; Bentley's epistle to Biel on Hesychius, i. 405.
- Heyne, his edition of the *Iliad*, ii. 371; Bentley's corrected copy of Homer sent to him by the Master and Fellows of Trinity College for his use, *ibid.*; his great satisfaction and gratitude on receiving it, *ibid.* and *note*.
- Hickes, Dr. George, the intentions of the non-juring party discovered from his papers, i. 426.
- Hierocles, Needham's edition of, i. 226; the Florentine manuscript, i. 227; Warren's edition, i. 228.
- Hoadly, Bishop, his controversy with Atterbury, i. 182, *note*; his reply to Collins, i. 342.
- Hobbes, Thomas, his doctrines confuted by Bentley in the Boyle's Lectures, i. 39.
- Hody, Dr. Humphrey, his great literary reputation, i. 19; appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester, i. 21; writes the Prolegomena to the Chronicle of *Malela*, i. 26; his dispute with Bentley respecting the word *Malela*, i. 29, 30.
- Homer, revised and altered by the Alexandrian grammarians, ii. 364; Bentley's edition of, commenced, ii. 331; resumed, ii. 366; particular account of it, ii. 360; his use of the *Æolic Digamma* discovered by Bentley, ii. 362; Dr. Clarke's edition of the *Iliad*, ii. 363; completed by his son, ii. 364; Mr. Payne Knight's attempt to restore the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, ii. 366; observations on his representation of the Homeric text, *ibid.*; Heyne's edition, ii. 371; Bentley's corrected copy sent to him by the Master and Fellows of Trinity College for his use, *ibid.*
- Humphreys, David, is admitted Fellow in the place of Serjeant Miller, ii. 102.

I.

- Ingram, Goodricke, employed in consulting the College Records by Colbatch's party, ii. 297; incurs Bentley's resentment in consequence, *ibid.*; Bentley's accusation against him and Mason, of having set the College cook in the stocks, ii. 298; Bentley's severe proceedings against him, *ibid.*
- 'Italic Version' of the Scriptures, ingenious conjecture of Bentley respecting the reading of a passage in Augustine, supposed to refer to it, ii. 125; Archbishop Potter's emendation, ii. 126.

J.

- John, St. 1 Epistle, v. 7., Bentley's prælection on this text, ii. 16; controversy on the verse, *ibid.*; Smalbroke's Letter to Bentley concerning it, ii. 146; account of its appearance in the Dublin MS., ii. 286.
- Johnson, Dr. James, a warm partizan of Bentley, ii. 59; severely attacked by Middleton, ii. 71.
- Johnson, Rev. Joseph, Bentley's College tutor, i. 5.
- Johnson, Richard, author of the *Noctes Nottinghamicae*, a contemporary of Bentley at Cambridge, i. 8; his ran-our against Bentley, *ibid.*; attacks him in his *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus*, ii. 1-3; his history and death, ii. 7.
- Johnson, Robert, Fellow of Trinity College, associates with Colbatch's party against Bentley, ii. 269; cause of his resentment against Bentley, *ibid.*; becomes promoter of the cause, ii. 279; his agreement with Bentley, ii. 354.

Johnson, Dr. Samuel, reviews Newton's four letters to Bentley, i. 43, *note*; his opinion respecting Bentley's style, i. 45; his remark on Pope's hostility to Bentley, ii. 372.

Johnson, Walter, succeeds Bentley in the mastership of Spalding School, i. 13.

Jurin, Dr. James, undertakes by Bentley's advice an edition of Varenus, i. 337; brief account of him, i. 338; his commendation of Bentley, i. 337, *note*; his notes on Caesar published by T. Bentley, ii. 407.

K.

Ker, John, account of him, i. 320; his offence at Bentley, *ibid.*; prints a book censuring his Latinity, i. 321; anecdote respecting him and Bentley, i. 320.

Kidder, Bishop, succeeds Bentley as Boyle Lecturer, i. 47.

King, Dr. William, his representation of Bentley's behaviour, i. 99; Bentley's refutation of his slanders, i. 130; his 'Dialogues of the Dead,' quotation from, i. 137, *note*; lampoons Bentley in his 'Horace in Trinity College,' i. 264.

King, Sir Peter, counsel for the Fellows at Bentley's trial before Bishop Moore, i. 360; when Lord Chancellor is intimate with Bentley, ii. 306; gives the living of Stanwick in Northamptonshire to Mr. D. Cumberland, Bentley's son-in-law, *ibid.* *note*.

Knight, Mr. Payne, his attempt to restore the Homeric text, ii. 366; observations on it, *ibid.*

Kuster, Ludolph, introduced to Bentley by Grævius, i. 184; account of his edition of Suidas printed at Cambridge, *ibid.*; completion of the work, i. 190; attends the Cambridge Delegation at the Jubilee at Frankfort on the Oder, i. 191; quits Berlin, and returns to Utrecht, i. 192; his edition of Aristophanes, i. 193, and correspondence with Bentley, *ibid.*; his death and character, i. 404, 5.

L.

Laughton, Dr. Richard, his conduct as Proctor of the University of Cambridge, i. 286; anecdote respecting him, *ibid.*; disturbs a distinguished party at the Rose tavern, i. 287; first made the Principia of Newton a ge-

neral subject of study in the University, i. 288; candidate for the mastership of Clare Hall, ii. 13; Dr. Colbatch's high commendation of him, ii. 30, *note*.

Layton, Henry, writes a pamphlet against Bentley's reasoning on the immateriality of the soul, i. 46.

Learning, Society for the encouragement of, object of it, ii. 395; Bentley's haughty treatment of it, *ibid.*; Middleton declines their offer to print his 'Life of Cicero,' *ibid.*; its operations, ii. 396; and *note*.

Le Clerc, John, his skill as a reviewer, i. 267; writes in the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, and publishes the *Bibliothèque Choisie*, *ibid.*; collects the fragments of Menander and Philemon, i. 268; his incompetence for the task, *ibid.*; excessive demerits of his book, i. 269; severely criticised by Bentley, i. 270; reported design of inviting him to England, *ibid.*; his hostility to Burman, i. 272; writes a threatening letter to Bentley, i. 274; is defended by De Pauw, i. 277; his review of Bentley's Horace, i. 322; decline of his reputation, i. 323, *note*.

Leng, Dr. Bishop of Norwich, his edition of Terence, ii. 221.

Lisle, Denys, is sent by Bentley as his representative to the Vice Chancellor's Court, ii. 51; his conduct in the behalf of Bentley rebuked by the Vice Chancellor, ii. 53; his insolent behaviour to Dr. Crosse, on the occasion of Bentley's eluding the summons to give evidence in the Vice Chancellor's Court, 1722, ii. 178; Bentley grounds upon his affidavit an application to the Court of King's Bench for restoration to his degrees, ii. 190.

Lloyd, Dr. William, Bishop of St. Asaph, his great interest in Bentley's advancement, i. 23; suggests to him a publication of all the Greek Lexicographers, *ibid.*; his publication on the age of Pythagoras, i. 132.

M.

Macclesfield, Earl of, see *Parker*.

Malela, chronicle of, i. 25; annotations on it by Gregory and Chilmead, i. 26; the publication of it superintended by Dr. Mill, and the *Prolegomena* written by Hody, *ibid.*; Bentley writes the Appendix, i. 27; brief analysis of, *ibid.*; dispute upon the name, i. 29.

Mallet, David, attacks Bentley in his 'Poem on Verbal Criticism,' ii. 376;

- remarks on the poem, *ibid.*; extracts from it, ii. 377, *note*; subsequent history of him, ii. 377.
- Manilius, Bentley undertakes an edition of, i. 34; his opinion of the author defended, i. 34, 35, *note*; Gevartius had projected an edition of, i. 49; conjectures respecting his age, i. 50; publication of Bentley's Manilius, ii. 397.
- Markland, Jeremiah, a member of the Caput, when Bentley was degraded, i. 59; his commendations of Bentley in his *Epistola Critica*, ii. 169; is among Bentley's acquaintance in his old age, ii. 400.
- Martin, of Utrecht, controversy between him and Emlyn, the Arian, respecting the disputed passage in John's First Epistle, v. 7, ii. 16.
- Mary, Queen, consort of William III. had the disposal of the Church patronage, i. 47; used to consult Stillingfleet, *ibid.*; desires his elevation to Lambeth, i. 70; promises to patronize Colbatch, i. 384.
- Mason, Charles, Fellow of Trinity, assists Colbatch against Bentley, ii. 267; an admirer of Miss Joanna Bentley, ii. 268; his character, *ibid.*; satirical lines upon him by Edward Prior, *ibid.* *note*; occurrence on his being convened by Bentley before the seniority, ii. 297; accused on another charge, ii. 298.
- Maur, St., Benedictines of, assistance rendered by them to Bentley in his edition of the New Testament, ii. 123; they are alarmed by an ingenious conjecture of Bentley respecting the reading of a sentence in Augustine, ii. 125.
- Mawson, Dr. Matthias, famed for his splendid liberality, ii. 293; defeated in a great contest for the Vice Chancellorship in 1730, *ibid.*; is elected Vice Chancellor in 1730, ii. 358; and re-appointed 1731, *ibid.*
- Mead, Dr. Richard, the celebrated physician, Bentley's great intimacy with, ii. 114; Bentley's letter to, upon the Sigeon Inscription, ii. 158; urges Bentley to revise the *Theriaca* of Nicander, ii. 170; commits to the editorship of Thomas Bentley the papers of Dr. Davies on Cicero's Offices, &c. ii. 356; they are unfortunately destroyed by fire, ii. 357, and *note*.
- Middleton, Dr. Conyers, commencement of his hostility to Bentley, i. 153; one of the party at the Rose, disturbed by Mr. Laughton, i. 287; his unfounded imputation upon Bentley, i. 373, 4; his testimony respecting Bentley's opinion of 1 John v. 7. ii. 18; resists Bentley's demand of an additional fee for creating new Doctors of Divinity on the occasion of the King's visit to the University, ii. 38; pays the four guineas, and is created D.D. by Bentley, *ibid.*; brings an action in the Vice Chancellor's Court to recover that sum, ii. 44; Bentley arrested on his suit, ii. 49; his second pamphlet, in reply to Sykes, ii. 70; third pamphlet on the proceedings of the University against Bentley, ii. 72, 73; his account of the proceedings against Bentley, ii. 67; his character as a writer and controversialist, *ibid.*; extracts from his pamphlets, ii. 69-73; Bentley's tract against him, ii. 75; his pamphlet against Bentley's College government, ii. 91, 92; it is censured by the Seniority, ii. 93; copy of the decree against it, *ibid.* *note*; confesses himself the author, and is prosecuted by Bentley, ii. 95-6; copy of his acknowledgment of authorship, ii. 95; *note*; his 'Remarks' upon Bentley's 'Proposals' for a New edition of the New Testament, ii. 130; observations upon them, ii. 131-2; Bentley suspects Colbatch of being the author, ii. 134; Bentley's 'Reply,' ii. 134-5; 'Further Remarks on the Proposals,' ii. 142; commendations of them, *ibid.*; extract from, ii. 143; supposed to have been assisted by Dr. Ashton, ii. 144; is found guilty of a libel, ii. 149; kept in a painful state of suspense respecting his sentence, ii. 150; fails in his endeavours to get himself included in the Act of Grace, 1721, ii. 152; begs pardon of Bentley, ii. 153; pays the costs, *ibid.*; is made Principal Librarian of the University, ii. 154; his tract concerning the arrangement of the books, ii. 199; quotation from it, ii. 200. *note*; assails Bentley in it, *ibid.*; is prosecuted by him for a reflection upon the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 201; effect of this prosecution upon Colbatch's case, ii. 202; is fined 50*l.* *ibid.*; his visit to Italy, ii. 209; his 'Letter from Rome,' ii. 210; renews his action against Bentley for the recovery of four guineas, *ibid.*; it is decided in his favour, *ibid.*; Zachary Pearce's dispute with him relative to his 'Letter to Dr. Waterland,' ii. 323.
- Mill, Dr. John, Bentley's intimate acquaintance at Oxford, i. 19; Bentley's first publication addressed to

- him, i. 28; publishes the Chronicle of Malela, i. 26; his edition of the New Testament, i. 33: unfounded alarm at its publication, i. 348; Middleton accuses Bentley of ingratitude to Mill, ii. 132.
- Miller, Edmund, his opposition to Bentley respecting the College revenues, i. 241; Bentley declares his Fellowship vacant, i. 245; the Seniors reinstate him, i. 246; draws up the articles of accusation against Bentley, i. 284; fresh attempt to vacate his Fellowship, i. 368; his petition to the King, i. 369; Bentley's violent measures against him, i. 408; Bentley proposes a compromise with him, i. 414; his 'Account of the University of Cambridge,' i. 415; censure of it, i. 416; he prosecutes Richard Walker, ii. 81; Bentley concludes a treaty with him, ii. 82-85; his subsequent history, ii. 87.
- Milton's Paradise Lost, Bentley's edition of, ii. 317-21; Milton's great care in correcting and polishing his verses, ii. 321.
- Modd, George, made Vice Master, i. 389; account of him, i. 409; joins in electing Bentley Professor of Divinity, ii. 14; his death, ii. 247.
- Monson, Dr. Henry, his decision of the case between Bentley and Colbatch respecting the proxies and arrears demanded by the former as Archdeacon of Ely, ii. 389.
- Montague, Dr. John, Dean of Durham, Bentley's predecessor as Master of Trinity College, i. 140; dispute between him and Bentley respecting his dues, i. 147; assistance given by him to Bentley in his edition of the New Testament, ii. 120.
- Montfaucon, Father, supports Bentley's request respecting the ancient MSS. at St. Germain, ii. 124.
- Moore, Dr. John, Bishop of Norwich, his liberal patronage of learned men, i. 52. 223; his noble library, *ibid.*; Baron Spanheim's letter to him in favour of Bentley, i. 221, *note*; his conduct when Bishop of Ely with respect to Bentley, i. 251; petition to him from the Fellows of Trinity, i. 251-3; requires from Bentley an answer to the articles of accusation against him, i. 299; his proceedings inhibited by the Queen, i. 302; again demands Bentley's answer to the accusation, i. 356; his opinion at the trial, i. 363; orders a sentence of deprivation, to be prepared against Bentley, i. 363-4; his death, *ibid.*
- N.
- Needham, Peter, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, publishes an edition of Hierocles, i. 226; assisted by Bentley, i. 227.
- Newton, Sir Isaac, his lectures at Cambridge, as Lucasian professor, i. 8; the *Principia*, i. 41; first explained in a popular form by Bentley in the Boyle Lectures, i. 42; his four letters to Bentley, i. 43; is returned member of Parliament for the University of Cambridge, i. 157; is knighted by Queen Anne, i. 184; a new edition of the *Principia*, i. 229; this edition urged by Bentley, and superintended by Professor Cotes, *ibid.*; his correspondence with Professor Cotes, letters in the possession of the Earl of Portsmouth, i. 230; publication of the *Principia*, i. 338; Bentley solicited by Cotes to write the preface, i. 339; his remark on the quarrel between Bentley and Hare, ii. 235; his death, ii. 245; epitaph suggested by Bentley, *ibid.*
- Nicander, some account of him, ii. 170; translated by Goræus into Latin, *ibid.*; Bentley, at the instance of Dr. Mead, undertakes a complete revision of his *Theriaca*, *ibid.*
- Nottingham, Earl of, his masterly answer to Whiston's 'Letter on the eternity of the Son of God,' ii. 141; thanks decreed by the Senate for it, *ibid.*; Dr. Colbatch declines to present them, *ibid.*
- O.
- Orrery, Earl of. See Boyle.
- Oxford, Harley, Right Hon. Robert, invites Bentley to suggest a plan for the settlement of Trinity College, i. 298; becomes Earl of Oxford, and Lord High Treasurer, i. 303; Bentley's letter to him, i. 304; his pride of ancestry, i. 308; Bentley dedicates his Horace to him, i. 309; private communication of the Fellows of Trinity College with him, i. 326; his encouragement to them, i. 327.
- Oxford, University of, addresses the Queen on the dismissal of the Whig ministry, i. 289; politics of, compared with those of Cambridge, i. 375; George I. founds a professorship of Modern History, ii. 210.
- P.
- Farne, Thomas, Fellow of Trinity Col-

- lege, assists Colbatch against Bentley, ii. 267; his high literary reputation, *ibid.*; feels the weight of Bentley's resentment, ii. 296; his unsuccessful contest for the Public Oratorship, ii. 297; his altercation with Bentley, ii. 298; pithy reply of the latter, *ibid.*; makes a treaty with Bentley, ii. 354; is elected Librarian of the University, on the advancement of Taylor, ii. 355; again joins the prosecutors, ii. 382; his menacing letter to Bentley, *ibid.*; effects of Bentley's resentment, ii. 383; his subsequent history and death, ii. 420.
- Parker, Lord Chief Justice, suggests the idea of an edition of the Classics, in *Usum Frederici Principis*, i. 406; writes to Bentley in favour of Pearce, i. 411; becoming Lord Chancellor, promises that the visitatorial power over Trinity College shall be settled under the Great Seal, ii. 79, 193; his policy, ii. 79; his affability, and easiness of access, ii. 185; prevents Colbatch obtaining the King's pardon for writing *Jus Academicum*, ii. 194.
- Pearce, Zachary, circumstances of his election to a fellowship, i. 411; encourages Dr. Colbatch to expect from the Lord Chancellor (Parker) a speedy redress of the grievances of the College, ii. 79, 80; writes two Latin epistles (under the signature of *Phileleutherus Londinensis*) respecting Bentley's 'Proposals' for a new edition of the New Testament, i. 144; his critique upon Bentley's edition of Milton, entitled 'Review of the text of Paradise Lost,' ii. 323; its great merits, *ibid.*; his dispute with Middleton, *ibid.*
- Pembroke, Earl of, Baron Spanheim's letter to him in recommendation of Bentley, i. 221, *note*; his great influence with Queen Anne, i. 222.
- Pepys, Samuel, Bentley introduced to him by Mr. Evelyn, i. 71; his opinion respecting Bentley, *ibid.*
- Phalaris, Epistles attributed to, opinion of Sir W. Temple respecting them, i. 62; Bentley's judgment of them, i. 62-3; Hon. Charles Boyle undertakes an edition of them, i. 65-8; Bentley's first Dissertation upon Phalaris, i. 78-85; confederacy formed at Christchurch to reply, i. 88; Boyle's Examination, i. 97; Bentley's enlarged Dissertation, i. 120; sequel of the controversy, i. 178.
- 'Philaethes,' author of a severe pamphlet against Bentley's 'Proposals,' ii. 144.
- 'Phileleutherus Lipsiensis,' a name assumed by Bentley in his emendations of Menander and Philemon, i. 272; again in his Remarks on Collins's Discourse of Freethinking, i. 344; Dr. Hare writes 'The Clergyman's Thanks to Phileleutherus,' i. 348; second part of Phileleutherus, i. 350; French translation, i. 353; thanks of the Senate voted to Phileleutherus, i. 373; Bentley proposes finishing the Remarks, i. 374; gives it up in offence, ii. 43.
- Pilgrim, Thomas, chosen Greek Professor, i. 330; Bentley's enmity to him, ii. 214; the living of Standish in Lancashire given to him by the Senate, *ibid.*; gives evidence at Bentley's trial, ii. 339.
- Potter, Archbishop, his ingenious conjecture respecting the reading of a passage in Augustine, supposed to refer to the 'Italic Version' of the Scriptures, ii. 126.
- Pope, Alexander, his hostility to Bentley, ii. 372; probable cause of it, ii. 372-3; Dr. Johnson's remark on it, ii. 372; Bentley's opinion of his translation of Homer, *ibid.*; lines against Bentley in the Dunciad, ii. 375; suppresses them in the second edition, ii. 376; restores them in his folio edition in 1735, ii. 378; attacks Bentley again in 1737, in his imitation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus, *ibid.*; takes fresh offence at him and his nephew Thomas, ii. 404; ridicules him in the fourth book of the Dunciad, ii. 405-6; origin of his mention of Bentley's hat, ii. 406; his great resentment against Thomas Bentley, ii. 407.
- Porson, Professor, his account of Bentley's *Praelection*, which he had read in his youth, ii. 19; elected Fellow of Trinity while Junior Bachelor of Arts, ii. 249, *note*; the one of all subsequent scholars who can best be compared with Bentley, ii. 414, *note*.
- Powis, Sir Littleton, a Judge of the Court of King's Bench, his sentence on Dr. Colbatch, ii. 198.
- Pratt, Chief Justice, his charge to the jury at Middleton's trial for libelling Bentley, ii. 150; advises an accommodation, ii. 153; his remarks on Bentley's reluctance, *ibid.*; his resolution to uphold the dignity of his Court, ii. 186; commits the publisher of *Jus Academicum*, ii. 187; treats Colbatch with mildness, ii. 189; his severe rebuke of Middleton, ii. 201; and of Bentley for his conduct upon

being served with the process by the Vice Chancellor's Court, ii. 204; delivers the final judgment of the Court against the University, ii. 205-6.
 Pythagoras, Bentley's remarks upon his age, i. 120; Bishop Lloyd's publication on the age of, i. 132; Needham's edition of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of, i. 226.

R.

Richardson, Dr. John, Master of St. Peter's College, his great skill and experience in academical laws and customs, ii. 57; his suggestion respecting the suspension and degradation of Bentley, ii. 58.
 Rubenius, Albertus, his treatise *De Re Vestiaria* published by Grævius, i. 49; his treatise *De Mallo* published by Grævius, with a dedication to Bentley, i. 50.
 Rymer, Thomas, his essay on 'Critical and curious Learning,' i. 112; reply to it, i. 114.

S.

Sacheverell, Dr., extraordinary sensation produced by his impeachment, i. 281.
 Senate of the University of Cambridge, passes a severe vote against Bentley, i. 334; anecdote of the election of Vice Chancellor in 1712, i. 335, *note*; repeals the decree, i. 372-3; address to the Throne carried by the management of Bentley, i. 417-20; the resentment shown against him, i. 421; deprives Bentley of his degrees, ii. 60; copy of the Grace against him, ii. 58; the Judges of the Court of King's Bench deliver their opinions against it, ii. 204; the Senate still keeps up the contest, ii. 205; peremptory mandamus to restore Bentley to his degrees, *ibid.*; proceedings of the Senate in consequence, ii. 206; gives a double vote to the Vice Chancellor in equally balanced cases, ii. 215; origin of the regulation, ii. 214-15.
 Senate House, first stone laid by Dr. Crosse, June 24, 1722, ii. 199; the King (George I.) gives 2000*l.* towards the building, ii. 210; King George II. gives 2000*l.* more, ii. 266, *see note*; completed and opened, ii. 292-3.
 Sherburn, Sir Edward, lends Bentley the collection of Gevartius upon Mani-

lius, i. 35; his frivolous complaint against Bentley, i. 100; Bentley replies to it, i. 118.
 Sherlock, Dr. Thomas, his early theological reputation, i. 371; becomes Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, i. 372; his judicious conduct in the disturbances, i. 376; eloquent thanks for the King's present of books, i. 377; appointed Dean of Chichester, ii. 43; is regarded as the leader of Bentley's opponents, *ibid.*; his name erased from the list of King's Chaplains, ii. 46; sneeringly called 'Cardinal Alberoni' by Bentley, ii. 48; answers Sykes's pamphlet in defence of Bentley, ii. 66-7; interests himself with Lord Townshend in behalf of Dr. Colbatch, in the case of *Jus Academicum*, ii. 184; his defence of the University against the interference of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 203; his able speech in the House of Lords, when Bishop of Bangor, against Bentley, ii. 327.
 Sigeum, an account of an old Greek inscription found there, ii. 156-7; commentary on it by Edmund Chishull, ii. 158; Chishull's opinions disputed by Bentley, *ibid.*
 Sike, Henry, (the oriental scholar,) Bentley obtains his appointment to the Hebrew Professorship, i. 186; his dreadful death, i. 329; commendation of him by eminent scholars, *ibid. notes*.
 Smalbroke, Dr. Richard, his letter to Bentley on the disputed verse 1 John v. 7, ii. 146.
 Smith, Dr. Robert, assistant of his relation, Cotes, in the observations, i. 203; succeeds him as Professor of Astronomy, i. 401; his high commendations of Bentley in his preface to the *Harmonia Mensurarum* of Cotes, ii. 168; succeeds Bentley as Master, ii. 420.
 Smith, Edward, joins Colbatch's party against Bentley, ii. 279; brief account of him, *ibid.*; pecuniary assistance given by him in the proceedings against Bentley, ii. 307, and *note*.
 Snape, Dr. Andrew, his name erased from the list of King's Chaplains, ii. 46; appointed Provost of King's College, ii. 140; supported by Bentley's friends in the election for Vice Chancellor in 1721, *ibid.*; Middleton dedicates to him his tract respecting the arrangement of the books in the University Library, ii. 200; Snape's devotion to the cause of the University, ii. 200-1; lays the first stone of

- the new building of King's College, ii. 207.
- Somerset, Duke of, Chancellor of the University, his treatment of Dr. Colbatch, i. 384-5; his visit to Cambridge, ii. 32; the Vice Chancellor and Heads apply to him respecting the quarrel with Bentley, ii. 56; he visits Cambridge in consequence, *ibid.*; confirms their resolution, and leaves Cambridge, *ibid.*; determines the amount of fees for creating Doctors at the Royal Commencement, ii. 265.
- Spanheim, Baron Ezechiel, his commendations of Bentley, i. 31; his commentary on Callimachus, i. 76; brief account of his character and talents, i. 189-90; his commentary on three plays of Aristophanes, i. 195-6; endeavours to obtain for Bentley the Bishoprick of Chichester, i. 220; his letters to the Earl of Pembroke and Bishop Moore, i. 221, *note*.
- Spinoza, his doctrines confuted by Bentley in the Boyle's Lectures, i. 38-9.
- Squire, Charles, appeals to the Bishop of Ely against Bentley's rejection of him, ii. 90.
- Sterne, Laurence, his plagiarism from Bentley in 'Tristram Shandy,' i. 362.
- Stillingfleet, Dr. Edward, appoints Bentley tutor to his son, i. 13; his character, i. 16; Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation, *ibid.*; consecrated Bishop of Worcester, i. 18; consulted by Queen Mary respecting church patronage, i. 47; remark of, respecting Bentley, i. 48; his death, i. 133; Bentley's expression of respect for him, i. 134; writes his monumental inscription, i. 135, *note*; his library purchased by Dr. Marsh, Archbishop of Dublin, i. 136; his tract on Archdeacons' Visitations, ii. 390; opinions of the publication contrasted with those of Dr. Colbatch's tract on the same subject, *ibid.*
- Stillingfleet, Benjamin, grandson of the foregoing, rejected by Bentley at an election for fellowship, ii. 254; his excellent character, *ibid.*; outcry against Bentley in consequence of his rejection, *ibid.*
- St. John, Right Hon. Henry, Secretary of State, related to Mrs. Bentley, i. 297; sends her Majesty's commands to the Attorney and Solicitor General to report their opinion on Bentley's petition to Queen Anne, i. 302; sends the Queen's further commands to Bishop Moore to stay proceedings against Bentley, i. 307; offended by Bentley's conduct at the election of Westminster scholars, i. 353; the bill for allowing him to succeed to his family property opposed by Serjeant Miller, ii. 88.
- Stosch, Philip de, employed by the British Government to watch the proceedings of the Pretender, at Rome, ii. 239; assists Bentley in procuring accurate collations of a considerable part of the Vatican MS. *ibid.* and ii. 288.
- Strutt, Samuel, leader of a confederacy of atheists, ii. 391; his 'Philosophical Enquiry into the spring of human actions,' *ibid.*
- Stubbe, Dr. Wolfran, Vice-master of Trinity College, i. 214; summons Bentley to answer Miller's complaint, i. 246; his correspondence with the Lord Treasurer respecting the Visitor of Trinity College, i. 326; removed from the office of Vice-master through Bentley's management, i. 331; his letter to the Prime Minister, i. 332; his letter to Erasmus Lewis, i. 363, *note*; his death, ii. 97; his vacant living claimed by Dr. Colbatch, ii. 98.
- Suidas, Lexicon of, edited by Kuster at Cambridge; i. 154; completion of the work, i. 190.
- Swift, Dr. Jonathan, ridicules Wotton and Bentley in his 'Tale of a Tub,' i. 93; and in 'The Battle of the Books,' i. 114; the idea of the piece whence taken, *ibid.*; animadversion upon it, i. 116; publication of the above pieces, i. 180; they impede his advancement in the Church, i. 181; his analysis of Collins's Discourse of Freethinking, i. 343. 347. *note*; his Gulliver's Travels imitated by Arbuthnot, ii. 374.
- Sykes, Arthur Ashley, his sermon at Bentley's Visitation, i. 427, *note*; writes in Bentley's defence at the time of his degradation, ii. 66; is answered by Sherlock, *ibid.*; his controversy with Middleton, ii. 67; Middleton's reflections upon him, ii. 71.

T.

Taylor, John, editor of Lysias and Demosthenes, ii. 294; his music-speech delivered at the opening of the new Senate House at Cambridge, *ibid.*; is appointed Registry of the University, ii. 355; publishes a remarkable instance of Bentley's sagacity in correcting a copy of a Greek inscription, ii. 412.

- Taylor, Walter, Greek Professor, gives evidence in Bentley's favour at his trial, ii. 341; one of his particular intimates, ii. 400.
- Temple, Sir William, his share in the controversy respecting ancient and modern learning, i. 59; observations on his mode of reasoning, i. 60; his opinions of Æsop and Phalaris, i. 62; his mortification, i. 92; and rejoinder, i. 93; his reception of Boyle's book against Bentley, i. 109; his death, i. 127.
- Tenison, Archbishop, desires the publication of Bentley's second course of Boyle's Lectures, i. 56; supports Dr. Williams against Bentley as Boyle's Lecturer, i. 77; head of the commission by whom Bentley was made Master of Trinity College, i. 140.
- Thirlby, Styan, publishes a violent pamphlet on the occasion of the dismissal of the Whig ministry, i. 289; abuses Bentley, *ibid.*; violently attacks Bentley in the preface and dedication of his edition of Justin Martyr, ii. 167; observations on his character and style, ii. 168.
- Titley, Walter, student of Trinity, his verses in imitation of Horace, book iii. ode ii, ii. 173; Bentley's parody of them, ii. 174; appointed by him lay-fellow, ii. 309, *note*.
- Townshend, Chas. Viscount, Prime Minister, suggests to the King to make a present of Bishop Moore's library to the University, i. 377; his negotiation with Bentley for an edition of the Classics, in *usum Frederici Principis*, i. 406; probable reason of its failure, i. 407; is supplanted by Lord Sunderland, i. 408; he and Walpole again become members of the cabinet on the change of ministry in 1721, ii. 152; they close the session with an Act of Grace, *ibid.*; his kindness to Dr. Colbatch, ii. 195; Dr. Hare dedicates to him his edition of Terence, ii. 222; his popularity at Cambridge, ii. 262.
- Trinity College, Cambridge, Bentley appointed Master, i. 140; brief history of it, *ibid.*; Bentley's regulation respecting fellowships and scholarships there, i. 159; account of his conduct as Master, i. 159-64: privileges of graduates in divinity, i. 165-8; decision in their favour, i. 168; College preacherhips, i. 177; Queen Anne's visit; she dines in the College Hall, i. 184; Bentley builds an observatory, i. 202; his anxiety for the reputation of the College, i. 203; plans for the repairs of the Chapel, i. 205; list of the subscribers, i. 207; the work superintended by Professor Cotes, i. 208; dissatisfaction of the Fellows, i. 209; system of mismanagement corrected by Bentley, i. 210; pandoxatorship, *ibid.*; College party, i. 211; Bentley's plan for improving the College livings, i. 239; case of Edmund Miller, i. 241; doubts as to the Visitor, i. 249; petition of the Fellows to the Bishop of Ely, i. 251; brief account of the foundation of Trinity College, i. 300; case of the Visitor, *ibid.*; question of the visitation of the College submitted to the Lord Keeper and Queen's counsel, i. 306; opinion of the Crown lawyers respecting the Visitor, i. 325; correspondence of the Fellows with the Lord Treasurer, i. 326; petition of part of the Fellows to the King, i. 395; the petition read in Council, i. 413; visit of George I. to the College, ii. 34; distressing mistake on that occasion, ii. 35; the petition of the College against Bentley read in Council, ii. 80; disposal of it by the Council, *ibid.*; state of the College upon Bentley's restoration to his degrees, ii. 246; Bentley completes the repairs and decorations of the chapel, and erects the clock, dial, and bells, ii. 252; Dr. Colbatch's representation of the state of the College to Bishop Gibson, ii. 254; the Bishop's opinion and advice, ii. 256; connexion of Westminster School with this College, *ibid.*; some detail of attempts in the reign of James I. to make Trinity College an appendage to Westminster School, ii. 256-7; Atterbury's attempt to establish the validity of those regulations treated with contempt by Bentley, ii. 257; smart reply of Bentley on the subject, *ibid. note.*; renewed efforts of Colbatch to procure the appointment of a Visitor, ii. 263; five leading counsel give their opinions on the question, ii. 264; tumultuous proceedings in the chapel on the occasion of the reading of Bentley's petition to the King, ii. 271; petition presented by Mr. Commissary Greaves, ii. 272; his long connexion with Trinity College, *ibid.*; the Bishop of Ely petitions the King, ii. 273; a committee of the Privy Council appointed to consider the case, *ibid.*; the Privy Council declines all interference, ii. 275; Bentley's dispute with Archbishop Wake respecting the Library Keeper's place,

ibid.; decided by the Attorney General, ii. 278; satirical remarks upon the students of Trinity in Taylor's music speech, delivered at the opening of the new Senate House, ii. 294; lines from it, ii. 295, *note*; internal state of the College, ii. 296; doubts of the Judges of the Court of King's Bench respecting the validity of the statutes of Elizabeth, ii. 301; the case between Bishop Greene and Bentley is argued in the House of Lords, ii. 326-7; and is decided against the Court of King's Bench, ii. 328; detail of the proceedings, ii. 328-38; petitions of Ord and Clarke to the King to increase the number of lay-fellowships, ii. 338; termination of the contest between Bentley and his prosecutors, ii. 385; the College is distressed by the expenses of the suit, ii. 386; Bentley's MSS. and critical apparatus for the edition of the New Testament, &c. bequeathed to the Library by his nephew Richard Bentley, ii. 415; short history of the College from Bentley's death to the present time, ii. 420.

U.

'University Loyalty considered,' notice of a pamphlet so called, i. 378; quotations from it, *ibid.*

University scholarship, Lord Craven's examination for, ii. 213; another, ii. 413.

V.

Varenius, Bernhard, a new edition of his Geography undertaken by Jurin, at Bentley's suggestion, i. 337.

Vatican MS. not used in revising the text of the Complutensian edition of the Bible, ii. 146.

Vice Chancellor's Court, nature and extent of its jurisdiction, ii. 44; its proceedings against Bentley, ii. 51.

Vigani, John Francis, appointed Professor of Chemistry in the University of Cambridge, i. 204; gives lectures at a laboratory in Trinity College, *ibid.*

Vincent, Dr. Wm. his testimony respecting Bentley's opinion of the disputed text, 1 John v. 7, ii. 19.

Vossius, Dr. Isaac, Canon of Windsor, his death, i. 21; Bentley unsuccessfully endeavours to procure his celebrated library for the University of Oxford, *ibid.*

VOL. II.

W.

Wake, Archbishop, interests himself in favour of the Fellows of Trinity College against Bentley, i. 394-5; Bentley's letters to him respecting a new edition of the Greek Testament, i. 398-400; his condemnation of Bentley, i. 412; Bentley's dispute with him respecting the office of Library Keeper, ii. 275.

Wakefield, grammar-school of, Dr. Bentley and Archbishop Potter educated there, i. 4.

Walker, John, zealously assists Bentley in his edition of the New Testament, ii. 122; some account of him, *ibid.*; introduced to, and assisted by, the Benedictines of St. Maur, ii. 123.

Walker, Richard, his attachment to Bentley, ii. 26. 349; his character, *ibid.*; his proceedings against Serjeant Miller, ii. 81; is prosecuted by Miller, *ibid.*; is appointed Vice-master on the resignation of Dr. Hackett, ii. 349; declines to execute the sentence of deprivation against Bentley, ii. 353; mediates an agreement between Bentley and several of his most active opponents, ii. 354; the Court of King's Bench, at Colbatch's suit, issues a mandamus to compel him to execute the sentence against Bentley, ii. 356; his return, ii. 379; a rule is obtained for a mandamus to the Bishop of Ely to compel him to execute the sentence, ii. 380; great difficulty of the case, *ibid.*; the Court quashes the writ, ii. 381; a new rule obtained, ii. 382; discharged, ii. 384; Bentley's principal associate in old age, ii. 400 story of Bentley calling to him for his hat, alluded to by Pope, ii. 406.

Walpole, Mr. and Lord Townshend, become members of the cabinet on the change of ministry in 1721, ii. 152.

Warburton, Bishop, his treatment of Bentley, ii. 409; his character, ii. 409-10; remarks of Bentley on reading the 'Divine Legation,' ii. 410; applies to Bentley a quotation from Cicero, ii. 411, *note*; his high opinion of Bentley's abilities, ii. 411.

Warren, Dr. Richard, of Jesus College, his quarrel with Bentley, ii. 44.

Wasse, Joseph, his verses published in the *Bibliotheca Literaria*, in commendation of Bentley, ii. 170.

Waterland, Dr. Daniel, Master of Magdalen College, i. 372; his theological disputation with Sherlock, *ibid.*; preposes the thanks of the University to Dr. Bentley, i. 373; his confederacy

- with Bentley while Vice Chancellor, i. 417; created by him D.D. in the presence of King George I., ii. 34; joins in censuring his libel on Colbatch, ii. 139; is one of the Syndicate to conduct the proceedings against Bentley, ii. 206.
- Westerhof's edition of Terence, ii. 231; is employed to form an index to Bentley's edition, *ibid.*
- Westminster School, its connexion with Trinity College, ii. 256; account of attempts in the reign of James I. respecting election of Westminster scholars to fellowships, ii. 256-7; Dr. Colbatch solicits the Dean and Chapter to interfere to procure the appointment of a Visitor for Trinity College, ii. 258; Dr. Robert Freind, the Master, supports Colbatch, *ibid.*
- Wetstein, John James, urges Bentley to undertake an edition of the Greek Testament, i. 397; assists him in the work, ii. 120; some account of him, ii. 120-1.
- Whiston, Professor, Bentley procures chambers for him in Trinity College, i. 203; his expulsion from the University, i. 290; his answer to Collins, i. 343.
- Whitehead, Paul, his successful imitation of Pope, ii. 392; is associated with a sect of atheists at Cambridge, *ibid.*
- Whitfield, Dr. is patronized by Bentley, ii. 106; brief character of him, *ibid.*
- Wilkins, Dr. his account of the visit of George I. to Cambridge, ii. 36, *note*.
- William III. consigned to his Queen (Mary) the patronage of the Church, i. 47; after her death appoints a Committee of six Bishops to dispose of the Church preferment in the gift of the Crown, i. 139.
- Williams, Dr. John, appointed Boyle Lecturer, i. 77.
- Willoughby, the Hon. Thomas, second son of Lord Middleton, contest between him and the Hon. Henry Finch for the representation of Cambridge, ii. 110.
- Wotton, William, a contemporary and friend of Dr. Bentley, i. 9; his extraordinary attainments when a boy, i. 9, 10; and *note*, i. 10; assists and corresponds with Bentley, i. 20; his 'Reflections upon ancient and modern learning,' i. 61; ridiculed by Swift in the 'Tale of a Tub,' i. 93; again in the 'Battle of the Books,' i. 114; his third edition of 'Reflections on Learning,' i. 181.

Y.

- Yonge, Philip, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, speaks a funeral oration over Bentley, ii. 413.
- Yorke, Sir Philip, Solicitor General, appointed by the University of Cambridge its counsel against Bentley, ii. 192; his high reputation at the bar, *ibid.*; origin of the connexion between the University and his family, *ibid.*; is appointed Attorney General, ii. 205; makes an ingenious and skilful defence for the University against the interference of the Court of King's Bench, *ibid.*; his opinion respecting the Visitor of Trinity College, ii. 264; is umpire between Archbishop Wake and Bentley, ii. 278; refuses his *fat* to stay the proceedings of Bishop Greene, ii. 304; is counsel for Bentley before the House of Lords, ii. 324; Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, ii. 337, *note*; his difficulty in deciding on Dr. Walker's case, ii. 381; holds for some time both offices of Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor, ii. 383.

THE END.

